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Velayati Off to Jakarta for OIC Meeting

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, heading a delegation, left here Saturday for Jakarta, Indonesia, to attend the 24th foreign ministerial meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), IRNA reported.

Issues related to the world of Islam in political, economic and cultural areas will be discussed by the OIC foreign ministers.

An experts meeting of the OIC in Jedda, Saudi Arabia, last month prepared the agenda of the ministerial meeting.

Felicitation

On the occasion of the feast of Mab'ath (the day when the Holy Prophet Mohammad (S) was appointed by the Almighty God as the last prophet), which this year falls on Dec. 9, the Tehran Times staff extend their heartfelt congratulations to Muslims all over the world. (See Pg. 12)

Editor

Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt, PLO Wary of Israeli Policies

Compiled From Dispatches

TEHRAN — Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdallah ibn Abdel Aziz on Saturday condemned Israeli actions against the Palestinians and warned that an unjust peace would lead to catastrophe.

Abdallah, after arriving in Qatar for a Persian Gulf Arab summit, said he "strongly regretted the aggression against the rights of our Palestinian brothers which have left us a feeling of bitterness.

"Doesn't the world realize that peace cannot be achieved by force and the despoilment of legitimate rights? Whoever wants to obtain peace must also give it," he added.

"He who ignores this truth pushes the region toward a dangerous future," Prince Abdallah said, hoping "the region's people will not experience an unjust peace in the future which will lead to catastrophes."

The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council summit due to open here Saturday will discuss obstacles to peace placed by the Israeli government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, PGCC Secretary General Jamil al-Hujailan said.

Leading PGCC member Saudi Arabia is opposed to normalization with Israel before a comprehensive peace is established.

Qatar and Oman are the only Persian Gulf states to have begun trade ties with Israel, but both have frozen steps toward normalization in protest at actions by the new Israeli government.

Arab states are not wary about the policies of new U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, seen by many as pro-Israeli, but those of the Zionist state, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Mussa said Saturday.

The Egyptian news agency MENA quoted Mussa as telling reporters that the United States was expected to "continue to act as an honest and impartial mediator in the peace process.

"That's the only role required of the United States," he said.

Mussa sent Albright, who was named by U.S. President Bill Clinton on Thursday to replace Warren Christopher, his "best wishes" and said he hoped she would act in accordance with the principles of the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference. (Contd on Pg.14)

Cultural Assault Serving West's Hegemonic Policies



LARIJANI

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Vice-Chairman of the Majlis' Foreign Policy Committee, Mohammad Javad Larijani, told the *Tehran Times* here on Saturday that the Muslim nations are presently the main target of the West's hegemonic policies. He added that such domination-seeking schemes are being realized in the form of a cultural aggression against the Islamic countries.

Speaking on the sideline of the first council meeting of the Organization of the Muslim Women Parliamentarians, Larijani called for more vigilance and substantive measures on the part of the Muslims to thwart such a full-scale cultural onslaught.

"The West has realized that, due to the increased awareness of the nations, it can no longer rule over the oppressed and underdeveloped nations through economic and military means; therefore, it is resorting to cultural means in order to deprive the youth, especially those in the Islamic countries, and undermine those nations," Larijani said.

He emphasized that women, in particular, are the target of the West's cultural assault and that the formation of women organizations, such as the organization of women parliamentarians from Islamic countries, helps the women to play a more decisive role in the society and resist the enemy's cultural conspiracy.

The vice-chairman of the parliamentary committee further criticized the polarized Western civil structure, saying that the formula of the civil rights presented by the West utterly ignores the Islamic principles and values and the culture and traditions of the Muslim nations.

Larijani also noted that the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken key measures, especially in the recent years, to improve the Iranian women's status and pave the way for the their presence in all social, (Contd on Pg.14)

Taleban Force UN Plane to Land

ISLAMABAD — Iranian radio reported on Saturday that a UN plane, which was carrying Tajik Islamic opposition leader Sayed Abdullo Nuri from the Iranian town of Mashhad to northern Afghanistan had been intercepted by Afghan Taleban aircraft and forced to land at Shindand.

"According to reports reaching us from Herat, a UN aeroplane, which was flying from Mashhad to Taloqan in the north of Afghanistan, was confronted by Taleban warplanes in Herat's airspace on Saturday morning and forced to land," the radio, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, said.

"The plane, which is now at Shindand airport, was carrying eight Tajik passengers. Abdullo Nuri, the Tajik opposition leader, is among the passengers," the radio added. (Contd on Pg.14)

IJO's Earnest Request: Iran's Membership

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — International Jute Organization (IJO) requested Iran as a major jute importer to accept the membership of the organization.



RABBANI

K.M. Rabbani, IJO's executive director, currently in Iran told the *Tehran Times* that the organization was set up to facilitate the activi- (Contd on Pg.14)

Middle East to Overshadow Trade Issues at Islamic Meet

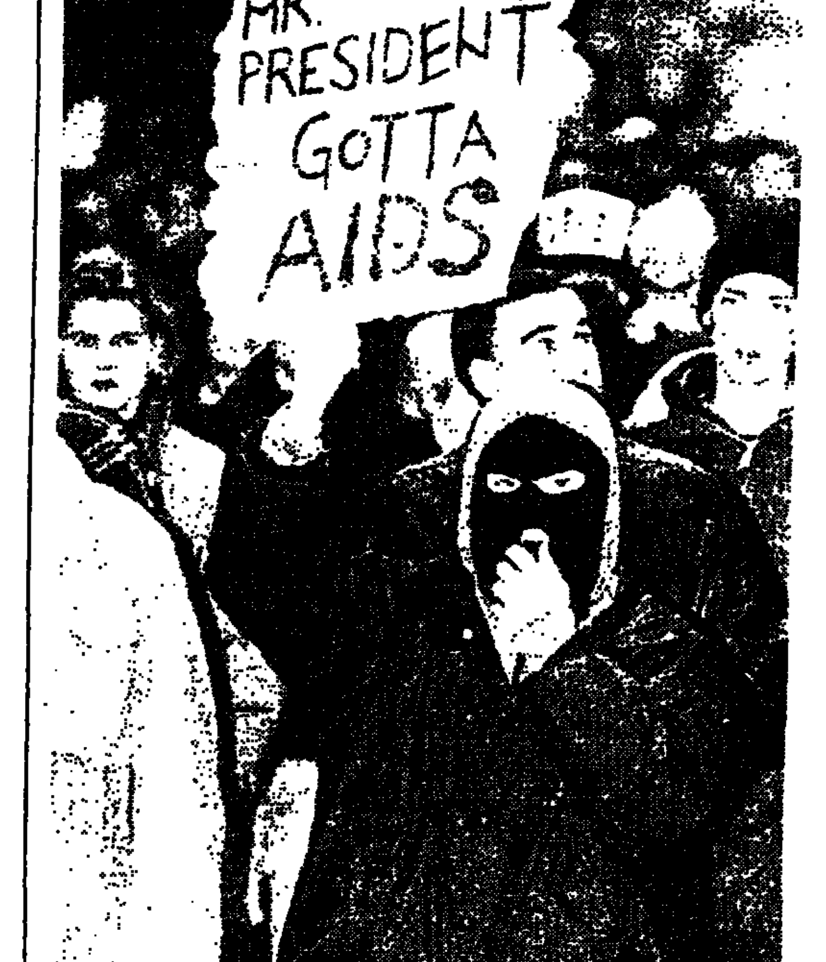
JAKARTA — The Asian hosts of an Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) meeting which opens here Monday may find the deadlocked Middle East peace process dominates the session, analysts said.

Jakarta has made it clear it wants trade issues to take top billing at the five-day meeting of foreign ministers and senior delegates from 53 member nations.

"The OIC has been too involved in political issues," Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas told the nation's parliament recently.

"Without ignoring or neglecting the burning political issues of the day the OIC ought to spend more time and should focus its attention more intensively on economic cooperation," Alatas said.

But Juwono Sudarsono, the vice governor of the National Defense Institute, told AFP that although Indonesia and Malaysia would seek to be "models of modernizing Islam" through economic development, it would be hard for (Contd on Pg.14)



BELGRADE, Serbia, Yugoslavia (December 6): A masked student carries a poster as he marches along with an estimated 100,000 people through the streets of Belgrade. The protest movement against Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic went its 19th day. *(AFP PHOTO)*

Belgrade Set For More Protests

BELGRADE — Washington was stepping up pressure on Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to accept elections won by the opposition as both sides in Serbia seemed to be looking for a way to end the crisis.

Over 100,000 people attended an 18th day of protest on Friday over the authorities' refusal to accept the results of local elections, which saw the opposition together coalition making sweeping gains, winning 15 out of 18 cities and towns.

On Saturday one of the coalition's leaders seemed to be offering the Serbian president, who has kept a low profile since the protests started, a way out without losing face.

"We must not overestimate Milosevic's responsibility," Dusan Mihajlovic, leader of new democracy, one of the parties in the coalition, said in an interview with the daily *Dnevni Telegraf*.

"The greatest responsibility lies with the socialist organizations in Belgrade. I know for a (Contd on Pg.14)

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In the Name of Allah

And (as to) those who reject Our communications, We draw them near (to destruction) by degrees from whence they know not.
(HOLY QORAN) (7:182)

OPINION

OIC Members Should Respond Properly to Albright's Appointment

The OIC's member states are to meet tomorrow in Jakarta, Indonesia. The Palestinian and Bosnian issues are on the agenda for their meeting.

Although the OIC has previously taken significant measures in dealing with the Palestinian issue, the crafty nature of the Zionist entity requires that the Muslim countries treat the matter more seriously and seek an ultimate solution to Mideast crisis.

Meanwhile, the recent Madeleine Albright's appointment as the U.S. Secretary of State has virtually driven the final nail into the coffin of U.S. mediation in the Middle East. In fact, ever since she undertook her task as the U.S. envoy to the UN, Albright frequently demonstrated that she was under the influence of the Zionist circles, since she never hesitated to air her anti-Islam and pro-Zionist views whenever she was ordered to do so by her Zionist masters. Thus, her appointment to the new office is a clear indication of the U.S. biased attitude toward the Palestinian issue. It is quite clear now that the U.S. is siding with the Zionist regime regarding the Middle East conflict. Hence, the Islamic states should no longer trust and count on the mediation role played by Washington in the Middle East conflict, as it is not an impartial and fair peace-broker.

The OIC members should use their oncoming gathering as a platform for adopting a unified stance and voicing their strong objection to the appointment of Albright to a key position in the U.S. cabinet. Such a protest becomes even more urgent in view of the Albright's previous anti-Palestinian and anti-Islamic attitudes in the capacity of the U.S. representative in the UN.

Furthermore, the OIC's unified stand will also express its members' disapproval of the U.S. double-cross and betrayal of the oppressed Palestinians, who put all their eggs in the U.S. basket and pinned all their hopes on its mediation.

Indeed, Washington should not expect the Muslims, particularly those suffering from the Mideast crisis, to trust it and cooperate with it anymore because the appointment of a Zionist agent to a key post in its administration is an affront to the whole Islamic world.

The OIC member states should boycott any further cooperation with the U.S. and encourage the EU to assume a more active role in the Middle East.

Lebanese Religious Leaders Decry Zionist Lawlessness

BEIRUT — Head of the Board of Jabal Amel Ulema, Sheikh Afif Nabulsi, in his Friday prayers sermons condemned the Zionist policy on building more Zionist townships on West Bank of River Jordan.

Nabulsi said that the Qods-occupying regime had also formed a special group to infiltrate the Hezbollah territory in a bid to weaken the resistance against the Zionist occupiers.

He, however, added that the Zionist measures stood no chance of practical success and were only intended to beef up the sagging spirit of the Zionist armymen.

Meanwhile, leader of the Islamic Towhid Movement Sheikh Saeed Sha'ban in his Friday prayers sermons at Al-Amin Mosque of Tripoli city, North Lebanon, blasted the Lebanese government for issuing licenses to open casinos in Beirut.

In related news, a member of the Assembly of Muslim Ulema, Sheikh Mostafa Malz, said in his Friday sermons that naming of Madeline Albright as the new U.S. secretary of state, would heighten Middle East tension and the likelihood of war.

Albright, a Czech by birth, and the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, is known for her strong Zionist sentiments and open hatred of Arabs and Muslims.

In the Ba'lbek, Eastern Lebanon, member of the Hezbollah Council, Sheikh Mohammad Yazbok, in his Friday prayer sermon, vowed that the Islamic resistance would continue its struggle as long as an inch of Lebanese soil is under occupation of the illegal Zionist entity. (IRNA)

President Calls For Increased Training of Information Forces

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani received a group of professors, graduates and students at the Information College, which is affiliated to the Information Ministry. The reception was given here yesterday on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the college foundation.

Underlining the significance of the Information College in view of offering special training to the Iranian information forces, the president said that science and expertise play the key role in advancing human societies. "Without competent and efficient manpower, the society will lack strong foundations and will be prone to collapse any moment," he stressed.

Hashemi Rafsanjani also pointed out that the country's information forces should possess a strong sense of analysis and decision-making and should be adequately familiar with the present political and economic issues. "Having commitment along with knowledge and competence and realizing the nature of political and economic trends together with expert evaluation and analysis will not only benefit information activities, but they will also increase the people's trust in the Iranian information organization," he added.

The president further praised the information forces for their valuable services to the Iranian people and the country and described them as the "eyes" of the holy Islamic system.

Bangladesh Calls For Expansion of Tehran-Dhaka Ties

DHAKA — In a meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Bangladesh Mahmoud Bayat here on Thursday, Bangladeshi Premier Sheikh Hasina called for expansion of Tehran-Dhaka relations in the political and economic spheres.

On the occasion of the end of Bayat's tenure, the two sides underlined implementation of previously inked memoranda of understanding, which envisaged establishment of shipping and aviation lines, oil cooperation and setting up of refineries.

The two countries have also signed a trilateral cooperation agreement with Turkmenistan, which calls for transit of Bangladeshi goods to Central Asian republics via Iran's ports and railway network. (IRNA)

Iran Reports Cases of Violations by U.S. to UN Chief

UNITED NATIONS, New York — Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN Kamal Kharrazi here Friday reported cases of violations of the Iranian territory by the U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf region.

In a letter to the UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, which was circulated as a document of the Security Council on Friday, Kharrazi said that the complaints of the Interests Section of Iran in Washington DC have been submitted to the Embassy of Pakistan.

In the first case, an Iranian helicopter belonging to the Ministry of Oil, whose mission was to transport the ministry's employees from Kharg Island to Forouzan Oil Platform, was forced to return on August 13, 1996, owing to the warnings of the U.S. forces and their military exercise north of Forouzan Oil

(Contd on Pg.15)

Iran, Malaysia Determined to Broaden Cooperation



Photo: Abbas Takin

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The prevailing international and regional circumstances require Iran and Malaysia to expand mutual ties in all domains, Majlis Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri stated here Saturday.

In a meeting with Malaysian Ambassador to Tehran, Mohammad Khalis Ali Hassan, the speaker noted that Iran and Malaysia have ample grounds for broadening their cooperation.

Nateq Nouri said that the coming century belongs to Asia and the West, opposing this reality, tries to hinder prosperous future for the continent.

Deploring the low level of bilateral trade exchange, Nateq Nouri expressed hope that the two countries expand trade exchanges.

He further hoped for further expansion of cooperation among Asian countries.

Khalis Ali expressed hope for further activation of Tehran-Kuala Lumpur ties especially in trade and industrial fields.

The Malaysian diplomat further said that during the Iran-Malaysia Joint Economic Commission the two countries' officials reached certain agreements and expressed hope for speedy implementation of the agreements.

Outgoing Sudanese Ambassador Bids Farewell to Majlis Speaker

TEHRAN — The outgoing Sudanese Ambassador to Tehran Qutbi al-Mahdi conferred with Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri here on Saturday where he called for consolidation and expansion of Tehran-Khartoum cooperation.

The Sudanese diplomat appreciated the Iranian Majlis speaker for his efforts to promote parliamentary cooperation between the two countries.

Pointing to the resistance of both the government and people of Sudan to the global arrogance, the speaker said that the Islamic Republic of Iran has always given priority in its foreign policy to promotion of relations with Muslim, Third World and African countries particularly Sudan.

Nateq Nouri expressed hope that relations between the two countries specially with regards to legislation would further expand during the upcoming visit of the Sudanese Parliament speaker to Iran. (IRNA)

Allameh Tabatabaei's Work Translated Into Bosnian

ZAGREB — The book Shia Islam by the renowned Iranian Alim Allameh Seyed Mohammad Hussein Tabatabaei, has been translated into the Bosnian language by the Croatian Islamic society.

At a gathering in Zagreb Mosque Thursday night, attended by a large number of Croatian Muslim researchers and thinkers as well as political representatives from Muslim states, Croatian Mufti Sheikh Omarbashic paid tribute to the late Allameh Tabatabaei, who he said had brought about a great intellectual change in the Muslim world through his works.

He said that the goal behind translation of the book was to make the Islamic schools of thought familiar with each other's viewpoints.

Allameh Tabatabaei, who passed away in 1982, at the age of 85, is also author of the famous exegesis on the Holy Qoran, 'Al-Mizan'. He is regarded among the modern day philosophers of the Muslim world and has several books to his credit in response to the Western theories of realism, rationalism and the like.

Another speaker at the gathering was Iranian Ambassador to Croatia, Mohammad Javad Asayesh, who said that the colonialism had for years been trying *to sow discord* among Muslim schools and exploit them to its own benefit.

He said publication of the book Shia Islam was a step forward towards bringing Muslims closer to each other and to make them overcome the plots hatched by the colonialists.

He called on Croatian Muslims to strive for strengthening of unity and solidarity among the world Muslims.

The book Shia Islam was written in the 1970s to acquaint outsiders of the beliefs of Muslims who adhere to the path of the Holy Prophet's Infallible Household in accordance with his famous saying that he was leaving two things *(Thaqalayn)* behind, the book of Allah and his own progeny, and that Muslims will never go astray if they held fast to these two. (IRNA)

Albright Unable to Introduce Serious Reform in U.S. Foreign Policy

TEHRAN — As it was expected finally the secretaries of state and defense and head of the Central Intelligence Agency of the U.S. were replaced by new faces, wrote the morning Persian daily *Iran* in its editorial Saturday.

U.S. Representative to the UN Madeline Albright is put in charge of American foreign policy replacing Warren Christopher.

Born in Czechoslovakia, Albright, 59, is referred to as an "unsuccessful diplomat." Under the Carter administration she was deputy to national security advisor and has become known for her hostile policies against the world of Islam and Iran, added *Iran*.

It is widely believed that America's new secretary of state is an advocate of aggressive foreign policy and U.S. intervention in various parts of the world.

Albright is the first woman to assume the post in the political history of the U.S. and is a close associate of President Bill Clinton.

Albright is taking the position at a time when Washington's foreign policy is in disarray and the White House is facing a wide range of problems and deadlocks in the world.

Albright has to start tackling variety of issues such as the problems in U.S.-Europe relations, confrontations and rivalry in the American Continent, the massive and costly presence of the U.S. in various parts of the world, increasing problems in the African Continent, and the Middle East crisis.

A review of the U.S. foreign policy and the reasons for repeated defeats of the White House in international relations are important enough to take up much of the time and energy of America's new foreign policy team. Other cases before the

(Contd on Pg.15)

Kharazi Addresses Energy Conference

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN Kamal Kharazi Friday said that Iran is the bridge between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf as well as east of Mediterranean Sea and the Indian subcontinent.

Addressing the "Dresdner Kleinwort Benson" Energy Conference, he added that Iran naturally is a part of or partner in any political development in regions such as Central Asia, Caucasus, southern Russia, East of the Arab world, the Persian Gulf and Southeast Asia, IRNA reported.

Commenting on Iran's huge natural resources and its political stability, he noted that the Islamic Republic has made great efforts in the mediation between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Tajik crisis and conflicting Afghan groups.

Kharazi further underlined that a sense of denial, a tone of rejection and a plan to contain Iran, is a challenge and detrimental to peace and security of the region.

On the motives behind the U.S. containment and sanctions, he stressed that there exists a military industry which has lost its lucrative business after the end of the Cold War and attempts to create a new cold war environment if not at an international scale, at least at a regional level.

Referring to Iran's economic dependence on the free flow of oil from the Persian Gulf, he said that this can only be guaranteed when the Persian Gulf is secure.

"In areas related to military affairs, we have signed all international agreements on disarmament and non-proliferation and we really believe in transparency. Vividly, our military expenditure is far less than our neighbors," the Iranian envoy reported.

"We have worked hard to expand our bilateral relations with all of the Perisan Gulf littoral states especially during the last seven years and we oppose any interference in the domestic affairs of the others and our relations are based on mutual respect. We have told our southern neighbors that Iran is ready to sign a non-aggression pact with all of them," he stated.

The U.S. containment policy, is a hegemonic desire to deprive Iran from its natural regional role and to apply an old-fashion concept which belonged to the Cold War era to a completly new environment, he said, adding this policy intentionally ignores the very positive aspects of the foreign policy of Iran and distorts the realities.

Regionally, Kharazi noted, this policy has turned the Persian Gulf into a garrison and has depleted the coffers of Iran's neighbors. The financial capacity which could be utilized for the development of the region is funnelled to the military-industrial complex.

Commenting on sale of some billion dollars of arms to the Persian Gulf littoral states, Kharazi said that its devastating regional implications are not exclusive to the Persian Gulf, the containment policy is postponing the economic development of Central Asia and the Caucasus in that it disregards the pivotal role of Iran in the economic development of the region and ignores this basic fact that the most efficient and useful route for oil and gas of the Central Asian and Caucasus nations is Iran.

On positive results of the U.S. containment policy in the Islamic Republic, he stressed that to the surprise of many, this poclicy was conducive to some positive results.

One of the main goals of the policy was to deprive Iran from export of oil and to reduce the country's revenue, Kharazi stressed, adding this vicious dream was not materialized.

He concluded by saying that what should be underlined is the fact that the containment policy is a failed policy and extremely unhealthy for the economic development and security of the region.

Lorestan Exports 1,374 Tons Goods

Tehran Times Sevicve

TEHRAN - Some 1.374 tons of various kinds of non-oil products worth $2.462 million were exported from Lorestan province during the first half of the current Iranian year (March 20-September 21, 1996), it was announced Saturday.

Ghlolamreza Daraei, head of the provincial customs office, added that textile, dried fruits, garlic, apple, noodles, tile, and pickled hide were major items exported to Italy, Senegal, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Turkey and Central Asian states, IRNA reported.

PTT Minister Inaugurates Mideast Largest Data Network

Photo: Abbas Kowsari

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Middle East largest data network became operational here Saturday in the presence of the Minister of Post, Telegraph and Telephone (PTT), Mohammad Gharazi.

The data network will provide the subscribers with an access to the latest domestic and international information.

Through Iran Pac (national data system) subscribers can have access to 30,000 data centers such as Lexis-Nexis, Questel, Orbit, Dialog, Compuserve, and Ties-Minitel which belong to Sittec-ITU, through 7 foreign gates.

The speed of the data exchanges within the network stands at 2 mbps and the subscribers access to the data centers is through direct contact with a speed of up to 64 kbs, and dial up with a speed of up to 19.2 kbs.

Greenspan Wants to Deflate, Not Burst Stock Bubble

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan could not have had more of an impact on the world's skittish financial markets if he had raised interest rates.

By hinting that buoyant U.S. stock prices may be overheated, Greenspan triggered a worldwide rush to sell stocks, bonds and the dollar on fears that the high-flying markets were headed for a crash, Reuters reported.

But analysts said the central bank chief — arguably the most powerful financial official in the world — was not out to bust the stock-price bubble, just deflate it a bit. Greenspan was unlikely to raise interest rates soon, they said.

"Greenspan wanted to take some of the air out of the stock market balloon," said David Jones, Vice Chairman of Brokerage Aubrey G. Lanston and Co. "In no way did I sense that he was threatening to tighten, though he clearly was jawboning."

His timing, in some sense, could not have been better. Blue-chip stocks, which have jumped about 25 percent this year, had shown signs of running out of steam this week as investors cashed in some profits.

India, Italy Sign Agreement on Joint Venture

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - India and Italy have reached an agreement for the setting up of joint ventures in each other's countries, signed by India's Minister of State for Commerce B.B. Ramiah and the visiting Italian Foreign Trade Minister, A.Fantozzi.

The agreement was signed at the end of the two-day joint session of the Indo-Italian Committee for Economic Cooperation, IRNA reported.

The two countries underlined textiles, garments, food processing, chemicals and pharamceuticals, ceramics, tiles, leather, automobiles and transportation, gem and jewellery as the main areas for bilateral cooperation.

Italy offered to train Indians in leather manufacturing, fashion garments and travelling goods.

Japan, U.S. Fail to Agree on Insurance Dispute

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - Japan and the United States Saturday failed to resolve a dispute over insurance deregulation but will continue negotiations before a December 15 deadline, government officials said in Tokyo.

Japanese Finance Minister Hiroshi Mitsuzuka and acting U.S. trade representative Charlene Barshefsky began a second round of talks at about 11:00 A.M. (0200 GMT) after meeting for 90 minutes the previous evening, AFP reported.

They reached no agreement on access to the Japanese insurance market but agreed to continue talks, the officials said.

U.S. negotiator Ira Shapiro, who met Japan's Eisuke Sakakibara, head of the Finance Ministry's International Finance Bureau, told reporters that working-level negotiations would continue in Tokyo.

Shapiro will stay in Tokyo to continue talks, he said, after the two days of negotiations which had been seen as the last chance for settlement.

Kyodo news quoted Barshefsky as telling reporters: "We will have our representative negotiators continue talks over the next several days."

Mitsuzuka and Barshefsky were aiming for a breakthrough by early Saturday afternoon, ahead of Barshefsky's departure for Singapore and the inaugural ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which starts Monday.

Mitsuzuka said there was a possibility that Barshefsky could return from the WTO meeting to hold another round of talks with him in Tokyo on December 14 and 15.

The two sides have set a December 15 deadline to settle the dispute, which has simmered due to Washington's insistence that Japan's insurance deregulation offers are insufficient and out of step with a 1994 bilateral accord.

China's Top WTO Troubleshooter Warns on Market Access Issue

Tehrna Times Service

TEHRAN - China's bid to enter the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is gathering steam, but market access remains a crucial stumbling block, the country's chief WTO negotiator Long Yongtu was quoted as saying Friday.

Long's relatively upbeat assessment of China's chances of finally joining the global trade body next year came ahead of the WTO's inaugural ministerial meeting which kicks off in Singapore on Monday, AFP reported.

"A momentum is there ... but there are still a lot of issues to be addressed, market access being a crucial one," the *China Daily* quoted Long as saying.

Stressing that the opening of China's markets could only be a "gradual process," Long said some WTO members were coming round to Beijing's position amd considering a post-entry transition period for China to meet certain WTO requirements.

Long appeared to be referring to a European Union (EU) proposal that would grant China WTO membership on the basis of a "down-payment" of WTO obligations undertaken by Beijing.

A further list of obligations would be taken on board by the Chinese government over a transitionary period.

Beijing had previously given a lukewarm welcome to the proposal because of concerns of an unofficial U.S. veto, but EU Commission Vice President Sir Leon Brittan announced last month that the Chinese authorities had come out in favor of the plan.

However, even if the EU can sell the idea to the United States, tough negotiations lie ahead as to what obligations would be included in the down payment.

Following Sino-U.S. talks on the WTO in October, acting U.S. trade representative Charlene Barshefsky made it clear Washington required further movement by Beijing on the key question of market access.

The United States insists that protectionist Chinese trade policies are incompatible with WTO regulations, while China argues it cannot be expected to open more sensitive sectors and leave them vulnerable to foreign domination.

According to Barshefsky, U.S. President Bill Clinton hammered home the importance of improved market access during his meeting with Chinese President Jiang Zemin on the sidelines of last month's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in Manila.

"I think they (the Chinese) really do understand now, after hearing the president, that it won't be a political accession," she said.

Insurance Law Boosts Omani Bank Deposits

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - The introduction of a unique system to ensure deposits in Oman has boosted confidence in the banking sector and its credits and deposits, the country's top banker said on Saturday.

Hamud ibn Sengour, Chairman of the Omani Central Bank, said all commercial banks in the Persian Gulf Arab country had contributed to the deposit insurance fund, which was approved by the government in March 1995, an AFP dispatch reported.

"There is no doubt that all the commercial banks operating in the country have benefited from such a project," Sengour told the United Arab Emirates (UAE) economic weekly *Emirates Today*.

"It has boosted public confidence in the banking system. This led to an increase in deposits and loans provided by the banks."

Oman decided to introduce the first deposit insurance mechanism in the Persian Gulf following the collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI).

Several banks in Oman and other countries were hurt by the 1991 closure of the UAE-controlled BCCI as they had deposits with it.

The UAE Central Bank said last year it was studying creation of a deposit insurance fund as part of banking reforms that also included stricter supervision of banks and curbs on their credits.

Sengour said Omani banks had contributed five million Omani riyals (13 million dollars) to the insurance fund while an equivalent sum had been subscribed by the central bank. A committee grouping representatives from the central bank and those banks has been formed to oversee the fund, he added.

S.Korea's Second Largest Labor Union Plans Strike

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN - South Korea's second largest union group, joining the country's biggest labour group, decided on Saturday to hold two strikes over the next 10 days to protest government plans to revise decades-old labor laws.

An official of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions said workers would go on a partial strike on December 13 and a full strike three days later, a Reuter dispatch reported from Seoul.

"We have decided on a partial strike on December 13 for four hours unless the government withdraws the labor reform plan," the official told reporters. "Then we'll have an all-out strike on December 16."

The official said his group was also considering coordinating industrial action with the Federation of Korean Trade Unions, the nation's largest union organisation, which has already announced it plans a one-hour strike on December 16 and a longer work stoppage on December 19.

If the two groups decide to synchronise their strikes, the action was likely to bring South Korean business to a stop on whatever days were finally chosen over the next two weeks.

The smaller confederation represents major workplaces, including Hyundai Motor Co, the country's largest carmaker, Kia Motors Corp, Hyundai Heavy Industries Co and Daewoo Heavy Industries Co.

The larger federation represents workers at most other major businesses.

Since the labor reform plans, the first in 43 years, were announced on Tuesday, unions have complained the emphasis is on helping business and making it more competitive, not protecting workers' rights.

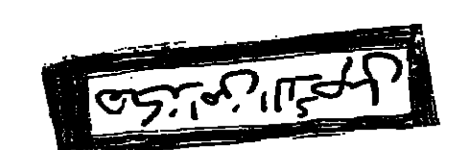
Unions object in particular to articles that open the way to worker layoffs and the introduction of flexible working hours that would hit seasonal workers and overstaffed industries.

The reform plan is expected to be put to parliament and passed before it goes into recess on December 19.

The threat of industrial action was a key factor contributing to a steady fall in the South Korean Stock Market last week to its lowest level in more than three years.

"The spectre of violent labor strife seems to be reviving. It's scaring investors away from the market," said Choo Hee-Yup, a broker at Dongwon Securities last week.

Brokers said the banking industry, long regarded as overstaffed, may be the most vulnerable to labor unrest in the near term because under the reforms companies can lay off workers for economic reasons.





CHILDREN'S PAGE

One weekend a bird built a nest in Mrs. Rose's Mailbox.
On Monday, the mailman, Mr. Luke, put a letter in the mailbox.
The bird pecked Mr. Luke's finger.
Mr. Luke was very upset.
He went to see Mrs. Rose.
He said, "There's a bird in your mailbox.
It pecked my finger."
Mrs. Rose fixed Mr. Luke's finger.
Then they went to look at the bird.
"Well, well," said Mrs. Rose.
"I must have left the door open."
"That was careless," said Mr. Luke.
"You won't get any mail until that bird is gone."
Mr. Luke drove away in his truck.
Mrs. Rose went into the house.
She didn't want to make the bird leave.
But she wanted her mail.
So Mrs. Rose put a note on a bag.
It said:

Mailbox is still a birdhouse. Please put letters in bag.

Mrs. Rose put the bag on the mailbox.
The next morning Mrs. Rose gave the bird some bread.
Then she looked at the bag.
There was a note from Mr. Luke.
It said:

Bag might get wet. Letters might get wet too.
Be smart! Get rid of the bird!

Mrs. Rose was very sad.
Now she had to make another mailbox.
Later Mrs. Rose put a pot on the mailbox.
She put a note outside the pot.
It said:

Mailbox is still a birdhouse.
Please put letters in pot.

The next morning Mrs. Rose gave the bird some bugs.
Then she looked in the pot.
She saw a note from Mr. Luke.
It said:

Pot might fall off mailbox.
Letters would blow away. Be smart! Get rid of the bird!

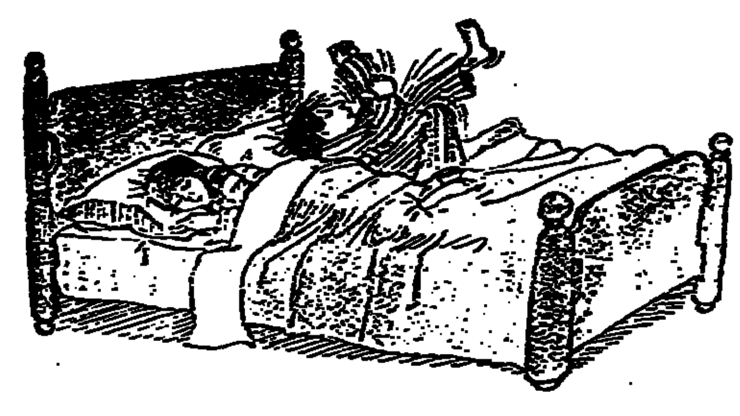
Mrs. Rose did not know what to do.
She said, "My new birdhouse is empty, and my mailbox has a bird in it.
I wish the bird lived in the birdhouse."
Then Mrs. Rose had an idea.
She took the new birdhouse off a tree in the yard.
She hung it on the fence next to the mailbox.
Then she put a note on it.
It said:

Mailbox is still a birdhouse.
Birdhouse is now a mailbox. Please put letters in here.

The next morning Mrs. Rose gave the bird some worms.
Then she looked in the birdhouse.
There were three letters and a note.
The note said:

Birdhouse is high and dry.
If mailbox can be birdhouse,
then birdhouse can be mailbox. That's smart!
Good luck to you and the bird!





Did you ever have to sleep with your
little brother who kicks and then . . .
dream you had a pony in bed with you?



Why Does Milk Appear White?

Milk and curd look white when seen in the sunlight but they appear red in the red light and blue in blue light . Do you know the reason behind this?

We know that the sunlight is a mixture of seven colors. These are : violet, indigo, blue, green yellow, orange and red. The colors of the sunlight can be separated with the help of a prism. The color of an object depends on the color that reaches our eye after reflection from the object. Whatever color is reflected by the object , is the color of that object. The molecular structure of milk and curd is such that they do not absorb any of the colors of the sunlight but reflect all of them. Thus these substances appear white. When milk and curd are viewed in red light, they look red because red color is reflected by them. The same argument holds good for the colours of other objects also.



Alireza Khaledi
Grade 2 Tehran

The Hairy Dog

By Herbert Asquith



My dog's so furry I've not seen
His face for years and years:
His eyes are buried out of sight,
I only guess his ears.

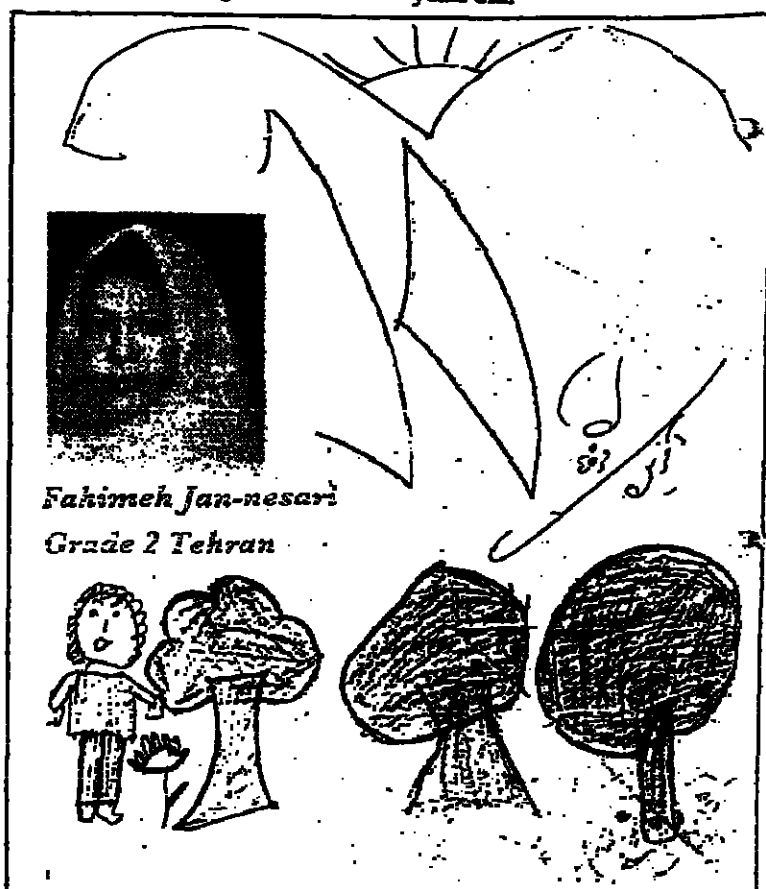
When people ask me for his breed,
I do not know or care:
He has the beauty of them all
Hidden beneath his hair.

What, Who, When?

Who built The First pyramid?



Imotep built the first pyramid in the 27th century BC for the Pharaoh, King Zozer. It was King Zozer's tomb. This pyramid is about 70 meters high and is still standing today. It is about 4,500 years old.



Fahimeh Jan-nesari
Grade 2 Tehran



Ivanisevic Breaks 1,500-Ace Barrier

MUNICH. Germany — Croatia's Goran Ivanisevic beat Australia's Mark Woodforde 6-4, 6-4 on Friday to reach the semi-finals of the Grand Slam Cup and pass the milestone of 1,500 aces in 1996.

And Ivanisevic will face Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov, who beat American Jim Courier 2-6, 6-4, 8-6 in Friday's last quarter-final of this six-million-dollar event.

Ivanisevic earned his win over Australia's Mark Woodforde in just 66 minutes while breaking his own record set two years ago of about 1,200 aces in a season. He has now served 1,511 so far this year (not including Davis Cup matches).

The Croatian had hit 1,495 aces before he had gone on court in this battle of two lefthanders, but a further 16 aces helped in on his way to sweeping aside Woodforde, who beat American Andre Agassi in the previous round.

And it was on an ace which the twice Wimbledon finalist won the first set on the second of his three set points.

Woodforde, a holder of 12 Grand Slam Doubles titles and who reached his career best ranking of 19 this year, broke Ivanisevic to lead 4-3 in the second set.

But the 1996 olympic doubles champion however immediately had his service broken in the next game when he hit a sliced back-

(Contd on Pg. 15)



PARIS, France (Dec. 6): Security forces search through rows of seats at the Parc des Princes stadium prior to the French Premier championship match Paris-Saint Germain vs Nancy in Paris. Three days after the bomb blast at a commuter train station in the capital, Paris Saint-Germain, leader of the soccer championship lost to the eastern team of Nancy 2-1. (AFP PHOTO)



AL-AIN, United Arab Emirates (Dec. 6): Chinese forward Hao Haidong (C) tries to pass with the ball between Uzbekistan defenders Davletov Fevzi (R) and Denisov Gennadiy (L) during their Asian Cup football match at Al-Ain stadium. Uzbekistan beat China 1-0. (AFP PHOTO)

Uzbekistan Rock China With Two Late Strikes

AL-AIN, United Arab Emirates — Newcomers Uzbekistan scored two late goals to earn a surprise 2-0 (0-0 half time) win over China in their opening Group C match in the Asian Cup on Friday.

Igor Shkvyrin scored in the 78th minute and Oleg Shatskiku in the 90th to give the former Soviet republic victory.

Pouncing on a misdirected header by Chinese defender Wei Qun, Shkvyrin found the net, lobbing the ball over advancing keeper Ou Chuliang.

Shkvyrin looked on course to score a second three minutes later, but lost possession to Qun inside the area.

Shatskiku put the game out of China's reach in injury time, running across their defense and finishing with a left foot shot from just outside the area.

China came close to scoring in the 40th minute, but Peng Weiguo's free kick from 20 meters out went wide of the right post.

Uzbekistan also came close to chalking up a goal just before the half time whistle, but China's defense cleared the ball after a goalmouth scramble.

Teams:

China: Ou Chuliang, Wei Qun, Xu Hong, Fan Zhiyi, Hao Haidong, Ma Mingyu (Gao Feng 46), Li Bing, Peng Weiguo, Sun Jihai (Su Maozhen 82), Li Ming, Liu Yue

Uzbekistan: Bugalo Pavel, Davletov Fevzi, Magametov Farkhad, Momotov Eduard (Sharipov Ilkhom 77), Atayan Stepan, Lebedev Sergey (Shirshov Nikolay 62), Bazarov Ravshan (Semyonov Aleksey 77), Igor Shkvyrin, Oleg Shatskiku, Denisov Genndiy, Khasanov Numon (Reuter)

LEADER:

Iran Must Become a Comprehensive Model of an Advanced, Well Developed, Prosperous Society

Mostazafan and Janbazan Foundation

Ministry of Roads and Transportation

Construction of Tehran - North of Iran Freeway, Sign of Might of Islamic Homeland's Technicians

TEHRAN — On the auspicious occasion of *Eid ul Mab'ath* (Ceremony for Appointment of Hazrat Mohammad 'S' as Prophet of Allah), the standard bearer of construction, President Akbar Hashemi Rafsnjani will break the ground for construction of the huge scale Tehran - North of Iran Freeway project.

The freeway will be one of the major national projects in the field of transportations and its pilot study has been completely done by the Iranian consultant engineers under the supervision of Ministry of Roads and Transportation, while the Mostazafan and Janbazan Foundation will take part in the executive commissioning of the project.

The Passenger cars will be able to move at maximum speed of 120 kilometers per hour at the straight paths, 100 kilometers per hour at hilly parts and 80 kilometers per hour on the mountainous areas of the freeway.

The Tehran - North of Iran Freeway is meant to connect the central parts of the country and the Tehran Province to the southern coasts region of the Caspian Sea. It is designed in a way to meet the tourism, economic and transit demands of the country. The freeway with its separated four lanes, two on each side, will be able to offer an additional lane on each side at the heavy traffic occasions and its maximum width will be 26.70 meters.

The total length of the Tehran - North of Iran freeway will be 121 kilometers and it begins at the western region of the Can River in Tehran.

The 121 kilometer long highway will begin from the river banks region of the Can River in Tehran suburbs at the end of the Tehran Ringway, where it intersects with the North of Abbas-abad Highway. Then it will pass through the Can River Valley and after passing the whereabouts of the Souleqan Village it will reach the Towchal Mountain Range. There, it will pass these heights through a long tunnel and extend on the northern mountain skirts of Alborz all the way to Do'aab region of Shahrestanac town.

This path extends partly through the Karaj River Valley up to Gachsar and Kandowan region, where a few tunnels, totally 4,850 meters long connect its southern Alborz Mountain parts to its northern Alborz region. From there on the freeway will pass through the Chalous River Valley and extends all the way to Chalous City's East-West Ringway and then divide into two eastern and western paths, one connecting Chalous to Tonekabon and the other to Nowshahr.

Forty double tunnels with lengths ranging from 100 meters to 4,850 meters will connect the open parts of the freeway.

The freeway will provide access to many beautiful natural resources along its path and meanwhile connect the Shahrestanak region and Marzanabad Town to their neighboring towns and cities.

Forty twin tunnels, whose length are between 100 to 2,490 meters, and altogether 27 kilometers long at each side of the Alborz mountain connect the open parts of the high way.

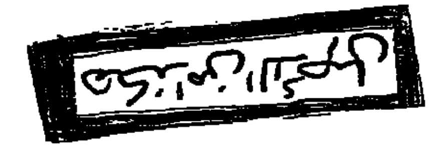
there will also be 10 long bridges over deep valleys, with a total length of 1,650 meters and six overpasses at the intersections of the freeway with other paths. The maximum altitude of the freeway will be 2,490 meters from the open sea level and its minimum 50 meters.

The maximum possible speed of the vehicles will be 120 kilometers per hour at straight paths, 100 kilometers per hour on hilly parts and 80 kilometers per hour at mountainous areas. The average travelling time for passenger cars from Tehran to each of the ends of the freeway in the north is estimated to be an hour and thirty two minutes.

The average travelling time from Tehran to each of the ends of the Tehran - North of Iran Freeway will be an hour and thirty two minutes for passenger cars.

Due to the ultimate importance of this huge national project, twenty four different contractors will work on the different parts of the freeway simultaneously to get it completed in the minimum possible time.

Tehran - North of Iran Freeway Inauguration Ceremony Headquarters



Council Meeting of Organization of Muslim Women Parliamentarian Opens


Photo: Abbas Kowsari

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The first Council Meeting of the Organization of Muslim Women Parliamentarians opened here Saturday.

Attending the three-day meeting, parliamentary delegations from Syrian, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, Azerbaijan, Uganda, Sudan and the Islamic Republic of Iran will explore avenues for establishment of the organization of Muslim women parliamentarians.

The meeting was inaugurated by the Vice-Chairman of the Majlis' Foreign Policy Committee, Mohammad Javad Larijani.

Addressing the gathering, Larijani expressed hope that the Organization of Muslim Women Parliamentarians would be a powerful arm for the Inter-Parliamentary Union of the Islamic countries.

The Iranian woman parliamentarian, Monireh Nobakht, outlining the objectives of the meeting said that the meeting aims to approve appropriate laws and regulations required for the Organization of the Muslim Women Parliamentarians.

According to the organization's article of association all the Islamic countries can be a member of the organization.

The meeting will run through December 9.

Arafat Holds Talks With Mubarak

CAIRO — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat held talks here Saturday with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on the stalled Middle East peace process, officials said.

The meeting took place at Mubarak's private residence in Cairo under a media black-out and Arafat made no public comment, said a spokesman for the president's office.

Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) number two Mahmud Abbas were also present during the meeting, the spokesman added.

Arafat was due to discuss with Mubarak "the results of two meetings on Monday and Tuesday in Lisbon between the Egyptian foreign minister and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu," he said. (AFP)

Bahrain Stages Unprecedented Boycott of PGCC Summit

DOHA — Bahrain, embroiled in a territorial dispute with Qatar, staged an unprecedented boycott of the annual summit of Persian Gulf Arab states which opened in the Qatari capital Saturday.

Qatar's Emir Sheikh Hamad ibn Khalifa al-Thani opened the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) summit saying he felt "strong regrets about Bahrain's absence," which occurred despite a last-ditch Saudi mediation effort.

The Foreign Ministry said here it had rejected Persian Gulf efforts to persuade it to attend the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) summit opening later Saturday because Doha has failed to change its stand on the disputed Hawar islands.

But the ministry said it wished the summit success despite the boycott, adding that Bahrain would remain faithful to PGCC principles and goals.

"Our decision is not directed against the PGCC and does not seek to torpedo its work," it said in a statement.

Bahrain mainly objects to Qatar's decision to take the island dispute to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at the Hague, even though Bahrain believes the problem should be resolved within the PGCC, the ministry added.

Manama accuses Qatar of profiting from the 1990 PGCC summit in Doha to force Bahrain to accept a resolution calling for the dispute over the Hawar islands area to be taken to the ICJ. (AFP)

Cuba Presses U.S. on Repatriating Hijackers

HAVANA — Cuba pressed the United States in two days of talks on bilateral migration accords here to repatriate hijackers and other Cubans who emigrate illegally, and both sides agreed to more talks.

"Against the letter of (standing) accords, according to Cuba's calculations, the number of people who have emigrated illegally and whom the United States has not returned, tops 100," Cuban lead negotiator Ricardo Alarcon said after the unusual bilateral talks concluded Thursday.

"If the United States does not return them — in violation of (current) bilateral agreements — then at least they could fulfill their international commitments in terms of deterring air piracy with a trial, imposing a punishment as an example," Alarcon said.

Cuba has been frustrated by the U.S. refusal to extradite hijackers, which it fears could encourage more such action.

John Hamilton, the U.S. undersecretary of state for central America and the Caribbean who led the U.S. side in the closed-door talks, said another round would be held in the next three or four months.

"We are going to pick up the pace of the meetings," Alarcon said, after the talks that were the first round in 18 months. They were also the first since U.S. President Bill Clinton signed the Helms-Burton Law in march to tighten the U.S. economic embargo on Havana.

In Washington, the White House reiterated that it would return Cubans who enter the United States illegally. (AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

CULTURAL...

cultural and scientific areas.

The first council meeting of the organization of Muslim women parliamentarians opened here yesterday with the participation of Iranian parliamentarians and representatives from several Islamic countries such as Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Azerbaijan, Uganda and Sudan.

(Contd from Pg. 1)

SAUDI...

Asked about Arab fears that Albright may prove to be overly pro-Israeli, Mussa said: "We don't fear the policies of Mrs. Albright but rather the consequences of the policies of (Israeli) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu."

The policies of the right-wing Netanyahu risk causing "a new deterioration in the situation in the region," the Egyptian diplomat said.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat warned in an interview published on Saturday that there is a strong possibility of military conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors, particularly Syria.

Asked by the Arabic-newspaper *Al Hayat* whether there was a likelihood of war, Arafat replied: "certainly.

"There is a concentration of (Israeli) troops on the Syrian front estimated at three divisions with another division on the Lebanese front, another in Gaza and one more division besieging our towns on the West Bank.

"A new concentration of (Israeli) troops has also been sighted in the south on the Egyptian front," he said. "These military movements are not a laughing matter and I have informed Arab leaders" of the situation, the president of the Palestinian Authority said. "This a dangerous concentration of troops."

Arafat blamed the right-wing government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the rising tensions and said his hardline policies were to blame for the deadlock in the Middle East peace process.

Arafat reiterated a warning that "the peace process could explode, not only on the Palestinian front but also on the other (Syrian and Lebanese) fronts."

The Palestinian leader said he remained convinced, however, that Israeli-Palestinian negotiations would lead to the "establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital."

Arafat added that he already feels like a head of state and noted that "the number of countries who recognize him as president of the state of Palestine is greater than the number of countries which recognize Israel."

Arafat described relations between the Palestinian Authority and Jordan as "good" and said ties with Syria were "normal." He said he was in "constant contact" with Syrian President Hafez al-Assad.

The Palestinian leader was expected in Egypt later Saturday for talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

The official Syrian press on Saturday denounced what it called the "racist, aggressive and anti-Arab policies" of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"The Israeli leadership is following an extremist, racist policy which is notable for its hostility towards the Arabs and towards peace," said the government daily *Ath Thawra*.

"If Netanyahu continues to defy the international community in this way, the region could explode and this man who comes from another world will be held responsible," the paper added.

"Since Netanyahu came to power six months ago, it has become clear to Syria that Netanyahu is not a man of peace and that he wants to put an end to what had been achieved in the peace process" since it was launched at the 1991 Madrid Conference, said the paper.

The paper referred to UN General Assembly resolutions of Wednesday declaring the Israeli Parliament's 1981 decision to annex the Syrian Golan Heights "null and void" and the Zionist state's jurisdiction over Bait-ul-Moqaddas "illegal."

"These resolutions are a clear international declaration that confirms the rights of Arabs, and which show that Israel is committed to aggression, occupation and expansion," said *Ath Thawra*.

Another official newspaper, *Tishrin*, said the UN resolutions "showed the deep international concern at the illegal policies being pursued by Israel based on occupation, repression and terrorism."

Peace talks between Israel and Syria have been on ice since February, but Netanyahu has infuriated the Syrians since taking office in June by insisting Israel will never give up the Golan, seized by Israel in 1967, and by announcing the expansion of Israeli settlements on the plateau.

Tension between the neighbors has been intense in recent months, with both sides raising the possibility of war.

The *Jerusalem Post* newspaper reported Friday that the Israeli Army has stockpiled nearly $300 million of arms and ammunition in preparation for a possible war with Syria.

(Contd from Pg. 1)

TALEBAN...

The radio quoted the Taleban as saying that the plane had also been carrying a number of Iranians.

"UN efforts to have the plane fly again have so far been unsuccessful and there has been no information about the passengers' fate," it said in a Pashto language broadcast. (Reuter)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

IJO'S...

ties of importer and exporter countries.

The organization enjoys members in two levels; importer and exporter country members, Rabbani said adding that for several years the organization has requested Iran to join IJO.

Rabbani stays in Iran to outline the organization's policies to Iranian officials. Iran is importing about 60,000 tons of jute annually and IJO believes that Iran's membership in not only to the benefit of Iranian consumers but also to the benefit of the organization itself.

He also added that in the current world situation, though synthetic fibers are more attractive, in long time jute proves to be more profitable. Jute needs support to find its real place among other similar products.

Rabbani who arrived here on Friday is due to visit some Iranian officials in the Chamber of Commerce.

(Contd from Pg. 1)

MIDDLE EAST...

other states to relegate Middle East peace to secondary status.

"If you go for a second track program like economic development the danger is that the Arab world may feel that support for the Palestine cause will diminish," Sudarsono said.

"It will be very hard for the other states so long as the intractability of Israel is very much in the minds of (Arab) leaders," he said.

Defending the accent on economic issues, Alatas said: "We hope that this (new focus) reflects the views of the greater part of the membership that the OIC should now spend more time on economics."

The OIC has "enormous potential" and the necessary institutions, such as the Islamic Development Bank, to pursue an economic and trade agenda, Alatas said.

"Unfortunately the institutions... have not been fully exploited," he said.

OIC Secretary General Hamid al-Gabid suggested here in September that the organization raise funds to develop the predominantly Muslim southern Philippines after a peace accord was signed the same month.

Alatas said delegates would try to combat the image of Islam as being "synonymous with violence, terrorism and... what the West likes to call fundamentalism. (AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

BELGRADE...

fact that officials in these organization did all they could to transform their defeat into a victory ... and that Milosevic had nothing to do with it," he said.

However, he added that the will of the electorate must be respected, and another opposition spokesman warned "we don't want to fall into Slobodan Milosevic's usual snares."

Serbia has been under intense international pressure to back down, and Washington Friday stepped up its efforts to persuade the authorities to respect the election results.

In a letter, U.S. President Bill Clinton announced he had decided to extend for a year a freeze on the financial assets on U.S. soil of the governments of Serbia, Montenegro and the Bosnian Serb entity.

And a strong statement from the State Department urged Milosevic to reverse the decision to partially cancel the results of the polls.

At the rally, for the second day running, demonstrators brandished an effigy of Milosevic in prison garb bearing the number 17111996 — referring to the date of the elections.

Friday's rally came despite the government's apparent attempt to defuse the crisis by allowing back on the air two independent radio stations it had ordered shut down earlier in the week. (AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 10)

CODE...

Deposing Microsoft

Unsurprisingly, Microsoft is the biggest player in C++ development for the PC. It wrote the operating systems and develops the SDKs, and so effectively writes the rules. When selecting our Editors' Choice from among the C++ compilers reviewed here, we were aware that for many corporate developers, the choice of Microsoft Visual C++ 4.1, is a reflex one. Such a choice isn't wholly irrational -- Visual C++ produces adequate code, is reasonably fast and is perfectly usable. However, as a product it simply doesn't shine, and in a more balanced market it wouldn't enjoy the dominance driven by Microsoft's marketing might. Watcom C/C++ 10.6 gave Symantec C++ 7.2 its best competition, with slightly better production of code.

However, the difference wasn't overwhelming, and *PC Magazine*'s Editors' Choice is Symantec C++ 7.2 It's easier to use and compiles much more quickly than Watcom's offering. It's almost certainly not the compiler that you're using today, but we were impressed by its speed, its user interface and its development tools, these being the only things that actually affect you as a developer.

(Courtesy PC Magazine)

WEATHER

The Islamic Republic of Iran Meteorological Organization announced today's weather as follows:

Forecast for Tehran:

Partly cloudy with dust

Max. temp. 12°C
Min. temp. 4°C

Warmest Point:
Minab 29°C

Coldest Point:
qaen -14°C

Some cities of the worlb

Cities	Max. °C	Cities	Max. °C
Riyadh	20	Vienna	–
Istanbul	10	Moscow	0
Rome	15	Madrid	9
Athens	–	Abu Dhabi	24
London	6	Karachi	–
Paris	8	New Delhi	19
Frankfurt	2	Kuwait	25

MP on Reasons for Mousavi's Withdrawal of Presidential Candidacy

KERMAN — Member of Parliament Mohammad Reza Bahonar said here on Saturday that the decision of former Prime Minister Mir Hossein Mousavi not to run for president in future elections was because certain people now critical of the current policies of the Islamic Republic had gathered around him.

He said, "It seems that those who did much publicity work for Mousavi's nomination are critical of the policies of the system."

Bahonar cited *Salam* daily, Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat (office for consolidation of unity). and Majma' Rohaniyoun Mobarez



BAHONAR

(MRM) as among the critics of the current policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The people and groups representing various ways of thinking that participated in the parliamentary elections will take part in the forthcoming presidential elections, he said.

He said Jame' Rohaniyat Mobarez (JRM) and other groupings which move in the same direction as JRM's together with the Society of Instructors at the Qom Theological School have voiced their support for Nateq Nouri's candidacy.

He said the coalition groups following the Imam's line have entered the scene more strongly than they did during the parliementary polls and they have gathered around Majma' Rohaniyoun Mobarez (MRM).

After Mousavi's refusal to run for president, the MRM is now persuading former Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Hojjatoleslam Mohammad Khatami to announce his nomination while Daftar-e Tahkim-e Vahdat and the Islamic Association of College Students are seeking nomination of former Minister of Culture and Higher Education Mohammad Moeen. However, he added, none of the two have so far agreed to nominate themselves.

The MP said Seyed Hadi Khamenei is said to be studying the situation but he was not so popular with the radical groups.

The Kargozaran Sazandegi (servants of construction) have entered into negotiations with First Vice President Hassan Habibi to encourage him to run for president in next elections, Bahonar said.

Bahonar said that the Society for Defense of Islamic Revolution's Values is the first official group to introduce its Secretary General Mohammad Mohammadi Reishahri as its candidate for presidential elections.

Asked about the possibe success of Hojjatoleslam Nateq Nouri in winning the majority of votes, he said, "we expect to have a serious and close contest among the candidates."

"In the past presidential elections. the late Imam Khomeini and present Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei implicitly and sometimes explicitly announced their views. But as far as we know, the Leader has decided not to take side of a specific hopeful in the next presidential elections," the MP said. (IRNA)

Over 18m Shares Transacted Last Week

TEHRAN – A total of 18,261,872 shares, worth over Rls.105.943 billion, were transacted in 6,117 turns for 3,619 applicants here at the stock exchange from November 29 to December 4.

TSE general price index of shares for last week reached 2,017.46 points, showing a drop of 36.15 points compared to that of the week before last.

Wednesday was the busiest day of the week for trade of 5,795,244 shares, worth over Rls.31.903 billion, in 981 turns for 474 applicants. (IRNA)

KERMAN — About 71 kilograms of opium and eight kilograms of morphine were seized from drug raffickers in Mersad, near the city of Bam in the southeastern Province of Kerman this week.

Four African Leaders Open Talks to Quell Bangui Mutiny

BANGUI — Four African heads of state began talks here Saturday to try to end an army mutiny in the Central African Republic — the third this year — that government and French troops have so far failed to quash.

The four, presidents Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso, Omar Bongo of Gabon, Alpha Oumar Konare of Mali and Idriss Deby of Chad, opened consultations amid relative calm in Bangui after several days of fighting.

They were welcomed by Central African President Ange-Felix Patasse and were due to meet both government officials and rebel leaders, although the time and place of their meeting with the latter has not been set yet.

Patasse hailed their presence as a sign of solidarity and witness to "how much the new Africa clings to nascent democracy."

The four were mandated Thursday at a Franco-African summit in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, to try to end the mutiny which broke out because of a pay dispute nearly three weeks ago.

It has now escalated into a bid to oust him as president, with the rebels accusing him of high treason and stoking ethnic tensions.

A spokesman for the rebels, Sergeant Donatien Ronossio, said Friday they would "listen to what they (the presidents) have to say."

The Central African capital was calm Saturday as both sides waited to see how the talks would develop. Two days earlier several people were wounded in fighting between the rebels and government troops backed by French soldiers.

It was the first time French soldiers took a direct part in an exchange of fire since the trouble erupted on November 15.

Although the fighting has been sporadic since then, interspersed with long periods of a tense standoff, the families of UN workers were evacuated Friday by plane to Abidjan in the Ivory Coast as a precaution.

Patasse said the delegation "is a sign in the eyes of the Central African people that, with one voice, we can say no to violence, no to the seizure of power by force, because the only way is through the ballot box."

The delegation is due to leave Bangui on Sunday. Later Saturday, it was to meet officials of bodies such as parliamentary groups and the legal system.

The fighting in Central Africa had drawn in French troops because France backs a series of regimes in the region, including that of Patasse.

However two French mirage F1 jets overflew the capital Friday on what was apparently a reconnaissance flight after several houses were struck by mortar fire and rocket-propelled grenades.

The Defense Ministry in Paris said that French soldiers had fired on the rebels "in legitimate self-defense." (AFP)

French Judges Deal New Blows to Chirac's Gaullists

PARIS — Anti-corruption magistrates dealt new blows to President Jacques Chirac's Gaullist RPR on Friday, placing the party's personnel chief and the Paris mayor's wife under investigation in separate sleaze probes.

In a third case, three ex-budget ministers — socialists Henri Emmanuelli and Michel Charasse, and the RPR's Nicolas Sarkozy — were called before a Paris judge in a probe on alleged tax breaks linked to funding of political parties.

As probes into an alleged covert RPR funding scheme widened, justice sources said Louise-Yvonne Casetta, nicknamed 'La Cassette' (the cashbox) because she was regarded as RPR shadow treasurer, had been placed under investigation by Nanterre Magistrate Patrick Desmure on suspicion of graft.

Casetta, who had been in custody since before dawn on Thursday, *is suspected of misuse of corporate funds in connection with alleged illicit funding of the RPR by the construction firm Maillard et Duclos in 1992-93.*

She was the RPR's head of *personnel until last September and is widely believed to have been its* main secret fundraiser.

Justice sources said she was questioned chiefly about links between RPR funding and public works contracts. She denied all wrongdoing, the sources said. (Reuter)

British Firms Keen on Engaging in Business Activities in Iran

TEHRAN — Head of the Middle East Department at the British Foreign Office, Nick Brown said here on Wednesday that British companies are willing to engage in business activities in Iran.

Meeting with Mohammad Javad Larijani, vice-chairman of the Foreign Policy Commission of Majlis, Brown said that ambiguities in Iran's foreign investment laws has made the British firms act cautiously.

The British official expressed satisfaction with the activities of the Islamic Human Rights Commission suggesting that European countries be kept abreast of its activities.

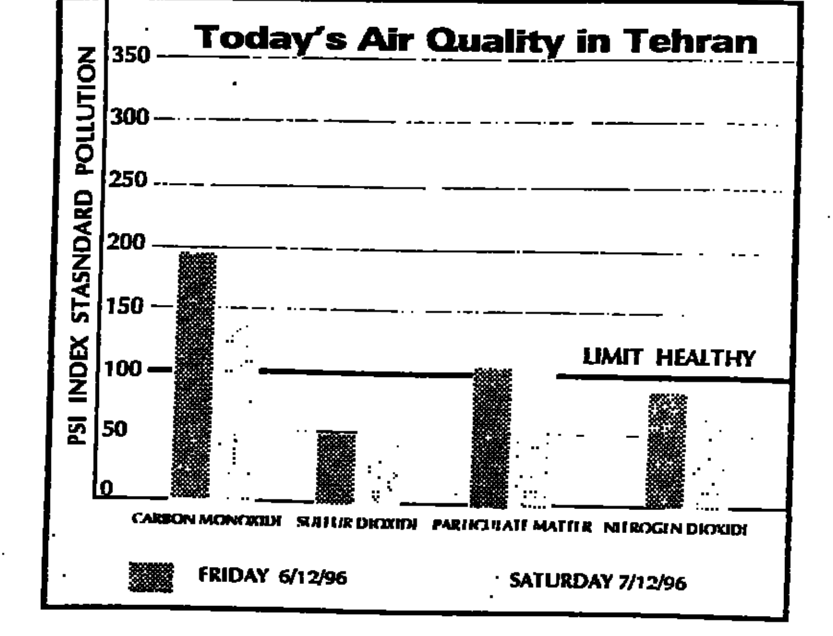
Referring to Britain's keenness to sell arms to the small Persian Gulf littoral states, Larijani said that Iran could have had a better picture of Britain if London had let the Arab countries use half of the money they spend on arms purchases, for making investments in other sectors.

Larijani emphasized that the Islamic Republic of Iran acts on the basis of mutual interests and now is the most politically stable country in the region.

In response to Brown's question on the function of the Majlis Foreign Policy Commission and on priorities of Iran's diplomacy, Larijani pointed out that Iran's foreign policy is based on its national interests.

"We are now evaluating and reviewing our foreign policy on this basis and we are going to assess other countries on the basis of their reliability and capabilities," Larijani said.

He predicted that relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Asian countries will expand significantly in the future, suggesting that any country willing to have a place in relations with Iran should adapt itself to the new conditions. (IRNA)



West Demands Milosevic Overturn Poll Fraud

BELGRADE — The United States demanded that the Serbian government open talks with the opposition, as President Slobodan Milosevic faced a deepening crisis over election rigging.

The U.S. State Department said Serbia needed to open a dialog with the Zajedno (together) opposition after 19 days of street demonstrations against vote-rigging in local elections.

It was not sufficient for the ruling socialists to allow independent radio stations to resume broadcasting and to merely 'think about' reversing a decision to annul the opposition victory in municipal polls, U.S. Spokesman Nichols Burns said on Friday.

"This is no time for business as usual on Serbia. This is a time for the democratic process to move forward in Serbia," he said.

Unimpressed with concessions by Milosevic over recent days, Washington and European states have insisted the ruling socialists confirm opposition victories in Belgrade and other major towns. Rruter

(Contd from Pg. 13)

IVANSEVIC...

hand just wide of the court.

Ivanisevic notched up his fourth win in six matches against Woodforde on a service winner on his second match point after having wasted the first through a double fault.

The Croatian is now guaranteed 431,250 dollars from this event to add to the 2.8-million-dollars he has already earned in our previous appearances.

In the Courier/Kafelnikov match, the Russian finally won through in just over two hours, the longest match of the tournament, following a final set riddled with service breaks from both players.

But Kafelnikov broke decisively for 7-6 and held serve to win the final set for his third victory in four meetings with the former world number one.

Saturday's other semi-final is between Germany's Boris Becker and Great Britain's Tim Henman. (AFP)

(Contd from Pg.2)

IRAN...

Platform, he noted.

Meanwhile, on July 29, *1996, the U.S. flotillas jammed the system over an Iranian patrolling unit, he said, adding a U.S. F-16 aircraft has also, on a number of occasions, flown over an Iranian patrolling flotilla.*

On May 2, 1996, two U.S. helicopters flew over and photographed an Iranian exploratory hydrographic vessel on a routine hydrographical mission. The helicopters came very close to the vessel and this pursuit lasted for two hours, the letter added.

The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran protests these illegal activities by the U.S. government and calls for an end to such actions, it concluded. (IRNA)

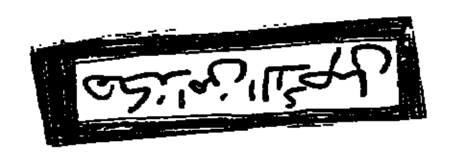
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ALBRIGHT...

new U.S. secretary of state include the unsuccessful U.S.-Israel cooperation and the nearly two-decade hostility of the U.S. administration against the people of Iran. Albright inevitably has to clarify her position on these cases, wrote the editorial.

Although Albright in her first remarks after appointment has talked about the need for "new ideas" and forgetting old practices and traditions, it seems unlikely that she will be able to introduce a serious reform in American foreign policy.

This is because the policy of "U.S. supremacy", which is the main element in Albright's world view, is in complete contradiction with the progressive approaches and ideas of the world public opinion which favors independence and freedom, concluded the editorial. (IRNA)



Chinese Girl Nearly Dies From Cigarette Smoke

SHANGHAI — A five-year-old girl in the east China city of Tianjin choked and almost died from cigarette smoke at her grandfather's birthday with relatives smoking for hours in a small room, the Wen Hui Bao newspaper said on Friday.

The newspaper said the girl was rushed to hospital and found to be having extreme difficulty breathing.

It said eight of the people at the party, including the girl's father, immediately announced they would give up smoking.

(Reuter)

Swede Threatened to Kill With Pet Snake

STOCKHOLM — A Swedish man was arrested after he threatened to kill his neighbor with his pet poisonous snake following a row.

The 32-year-old man was visiting his neighbor, when the two men started arguing.

He slipped out for a moment and returned with his pet venomous snake under his jacket which he proceeded to wave in his opponent's face, threatening to kill him.

The snake owner was arrested after his neighbor called the police and the snake was taken to a nearby zoo.

(Reuter)

Britain Faces Minority Government

LONDON — Britain on Saturday faced its first minority government for 17 years after a Conservative lawmaker withdrew his support for the ruling party in Parliament.

Prime Minister John Major's wafer-thin majority was effectively wiped out when right-winger Sir John Gorst launched his protest over a hospital closure in his London constituency.

Friday's bombshell ended a grim week for Major when splits were revealed all the way to the top of the government over Britain's role in the European Union.

Major, who has to call a general election by next May, faces another rough ride next week with a two-day parliamentary debate that will offer a perfect opportunity for right-wing lawmakers to fuel their mutiny over Europe.

Terry Dicks, one of the so-called "Eurosceptics" who wants Major to rule out British entry into a single European currency and abandon his "wait-and-see" policy, launched a savage attack on the prime minister.

Threatening to quit the ruling party, Dicks said: "I don't want to be on a ship like the Titanic where the Helmsman can see the ice ahead and simply says, 'let's wait and see what happens'."

The opposition Labour Party, which has a huge lead in opinion polls, was quick to turn the knife.

Labour leader Tony Blair told the *Independent*, newspaper: "We have reached a decisive moment. They (the Conservatives) are not capable of being led they are not capable of governing with any coherence, any leadership, any direction."

Labour should have further cause to celebrate as it is expected to win a by-election next Thursday in one of its strongholds.

But history favors Major holding on.

(Reuter)



NEW DELHI, India (December 6): Indian school children mingle with Hanna Barbara's Tom and Jerry cartoon characters at an amusement park in the Indian capital. The bright colored cat and mouse duo from the United States are on their first visit to India.

(AFP PHOTO)

U.S. Shuttle Lands in Florida

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida — The U.S. Space Shuttle Columbia glided to a dawn touchdown in Florida on Saturday, ending a record-breaking 18-day mission marred by the cancellation of two space walks.

The $2 billion spaceship landed on the three-mile (4.8 km) long runway at Kennedy Space Center at 6:49 a.m. (1149 GMT), just a short distance from the launch pad it blasted off from on Nov.19.

It was NASA's third attempt to land the shuttle. Dense fog in Florida and high winds at the backup landing strip in California had cancelled the shuttle's landing on Friday. The day before cloudy skies at the Florida spaceport were the problem.

The shuttle's extended stay in space propelled the mission into the record books as the longest ever in the 15-year shuttle program. Columbia, the oldest of NASA's four shuttles, had set the previous record of 17 days last July.

The marathon mission was marred by a jammed airlock hatch that forced NASA to cancel a pair of space walks. Astronauts Tammy Jernigan and Tom Jones had spent months training for the space walks, which had been intended to test construction tools for a planned permanent space station.

(Reuter)

Peruvian Police Nab Rebel Leader

LIMA — Peruvian police arrested the number two leader of the rebel Shining Path, Elizabeth Cardenas Huayta, in Lima as she was reorganizing the subversive organization, officials said Saturday.

Huayta, known by her rebel monitor as "Comrade Aurora," was arrested Wednesday as she was awaiting information from two influential rebels who operate in the jungle zone of Huallaga, the spokesmen of the National Directorate Against Terrorism said.

She rose to the number-two position after the rebel leadership was assumed by Oscar Ramirez Durand following the September 1992 arrest of Abimael Guzman.

(AFP)

Remains of World War II German Pilot and Plane Exhumed

ROUEN, France — The remains of a World War II German pilot and the cockpit of his plane have been exhumed in a small village in northwest France, 52 years after the air raids over Normandy in June 1944, the local town hall said on Saturday.

A man who remembered seeing the German fighter plane shot down over fields at Ecretteville-les-Baons, recently contacted an association which tries to track down pilots listed as missing after the battles in French skies.

Members of the association arrived in the village a few days ago with a crane, with which they were able to dig up the remains of the pilot and his plane, buried more than five meters (15 feet) down, according to the wife of the farmer on whose land it was found.

She said the pilot's battledress jacket, parachute and identification papers as well as his service arm were almost intact, presumably owing their state of conservation to being buried at such a depth.

Local police were unable to say where the remains had been taken.

(AFP)

Sri Lanka Minister Escapes From Tiger-Held Territory

COLOMBO — The Sri Lankan minister leading the military campaign against Tamil Tiger guerrillas had what he described as a "close shave" Saturday when his helicopter crash landed in hostile territory.

The helicopter crew and passengers including Anuruddha Ratwatte, the energy minister and junior defense minister, army chief Rohan Daluwatte and police inspector General W. B. Rajaguru had to walk five kilometers (three miles) to safety.

The instruments in the helicopter malfunctioned while flying to the town of Weli Oya and the pilot crash landed in Tiger-held jungle territory when the aircraft ran out of fuel, Ratatte said.

"We had a close shave," he told local reporters after reaching Weli Oya, 300 kilometers (187 miles) northeast of here. "We landed in Tiger territory in the Wanni (jungles)."

The minister said he and the eight crew and passengers then walked through thick jungle to reach a main road and safety.

Vast areas of the island's northern region are either controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eclam (LTTE) or regarded as no-man's land where neither security forces nor rebels are present.

"We took all the precautions possible and used our intelligence to get to safety," Ratwatte said. "We learnt many things."

Reports from Weli Oya said the crippled helicopter had been destroyed to prevent it falling into the hands of the Tigers.

(AFP)

Mother Teresa Cheerful, Meets Colleagues

CALCUTTA — Mother Teresa, recovering from heart surgery, was cheerful on Saturday and met members of her Roman Catholic religious order, a clinic administrator said.

"Mother Teresa is better. She is very cheerful. She had a good sleep," S.K. Tiwari, an administrator at Calcutta's B.M. Birla Heart Research Center, told reporters.

He said the 86-year-old nun, known as the "Saint of the Gutters" for her work with the poor, the sick and dying, also met members of her missionaries of charity order.

Doctors said on Friday that Mother Teresa would not return home as hoped this weekend and had little chance of resuming work in the immediate future.

Mother Teresa had surgery on November 29 to clear two blocked coronary arteries. But an irregular heartbeat and lung and kidney problems have complicated her recovery.

(Reuter)

Japan Mudslide Claims Seven

TOKYO — Seven bodies had been found and another seven people were missing as rescuers searched into a second freezing night after mudslides buried two construction sites in central Japan, police said Saturday.

One body swept away by the wave of mud, sand and rock was found 800 meters (2,640 feet) from where the person had been working, a police spokesman said.

Rescuers were forced to move cautiously as minor slides repeatedly brought their search to a halt, he said. Operations were suspended for nearly two hours at one stage because of fears of another slip.

The Nagano meteorological observatory issued a warning Saturday of further possible avalanches in the prefecture.

"Police helicopters are hovering above the accident site to watch for signs of secondary disasters," the spokesman said.

Rescue workers dug through Friday night and all Saturday in freezing conditions following mudslides at two construction sites near the village of Otari in Nagano prefecture mid-morning Friday.

By nightfall Saturday, the bodies of six men and one woman had been recovered and taken to a nearby Buddhist temple, where they were laid out in coffins.

(AFP)

Seven Killed in Cape Town Fire

CAPE TOWN — Seven people, including a pregnant woman and four children, died Saturday when a fire gutted a two-story block of flats in Woodstock suburb here, police said.

A five-year-old boy and his seven-year-old sister were among the dead, police spokeswoman inspector Verna Simon said.

The girl jumped to her death when she tried to escape the fire but missed a blanket being held for her by people below, she added.

A four-year-old boy died with his pregnant mother while another boy from the same family also died. A fourth boy, aged seven, was still unaccounted for.

(AFP)

Presidential, Parliamentary Vote Opens in Ghana

ACCRA — Presidential and parliamentary polls opened smoothly early Saturday in Ghana, with no serious incidents reported.

In the capital, voters began queueing at polling stations around 4:00 a.m. (0400 GMT) three hours before the official opening time.

Voting began on time in the half-dozen polling stations visited by AFP in the hour after polling stations opened.

In the area around the central town of Kumasi, where several incidents of election-related violence have occurred in the last 10 days, voters were peaceful and orderly, AFP contacts there reported.

In one Accra polling station, the wrong book of ballot papers had been issued, but party agent Solomon Laryea said this would not affect the voting procedure.

(AFP)

Burma Frees Most Detainees After Crackdown

RANGOON — Most of the 261 Burmese students and sympathizers held after a protest near the university of Yangon (Rangoon) was broken up earlier on Saturday have been released, a government spokesman said.

"Most of those held in the 3.00 a.m. operation have been released by this early afternoon and I would expect all of them to be freed by the end of the day," the spokesman told Reuters. He did not give details of how many people had been freed.

He said the government was still checking the identities of those held at the Kyaikasan ground (a former horse racing course) in central Rangoon.

The students and sympathizers who were held were part of a larger group of about 500 that had gathered outside the university on Friday to protest against the continued detention of 80 student leaders.

They had also demanded that they be allowed to form student unions on campuses.

(Reuter)

'WTO Used to Bully the South'

The World Trade Organization, says the Malaysian premier, is being used by developed countries to 'bully' developing countries into adjusting their economic policies so that Northern corporations can capture their markets.

By: Martin Khor

New York — Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad has criticized the developed countries for using the World Trade Organization to 'bully' developing countries into adjusting their economic policies so that Northern corporations can capture their markets.

He also attacked the efforts of Northern countries to link trade with the environment and labor standards as an attempt to deny developing countries of their already meager comparative advantage.

In a comprehensive and often hard-hitting speech at the UN General Assembly on 27 September 1996, the prime minister also warned that globalization as defined by the powerful countries simply meant the breaking down of borders so that those with capital and goods would be free to dominate the markets.

Dr. Mahathir said that now that the concept of Globalism is so intimately linked with international trade, it was important to critically examine the realities of this so-called free trade.

In one of the strongest critiques ever made by a developing country leader on the impact of the Uruguay Round and the WTO trade regime, the Malaysian prime minister said: 'The painfully long history of the Uruguay Round negotiations should have forewarned us that the WTO, although established as a rules-based multilateral organization to regulate international trade, will become answerable only to the worlds wealthiest economic powers.

'Like the Bretton Woods institutions, the WTO remains outside any relationship of accountability to the far more democratic United Nations General Assembly.'

Dr. Mahathir added that during the Uruguay Round, the developing countries discovered that instead of negotiating international rules on trade in manufactured goods, the rich countries of the North had widened the agenda and pushed for liberalization in economic areas where they clearly have an advantage, in particular the financial services and investment.

The prime minister said even though some South countries, including Malaysia, had benefited from trade liberalization, the GATT [General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade] agreement nevertheless harbors new threats to developing and newly emerging economies.

'Not only have the poor countries of the South to struggle uphill merely to meet the basic needs of their peoples, but they are now bullied into adjusting their economic policies to meet their new obligations under GATT so that Northern-based corporations can penetrate and capture their markets.

'The poor may not reserve their markets for themselves even when they have no capacity to penetrate the market of the rich.'

Dr. Mahathir said that 'fair competition and level playing fields are only for the rich.' For example, he added, their attempts to link the environment and labor standards to trade in manufactured goods were clear attempts to deny developing countries their meager comparaive advantage.

'The relationship between trade and labor standards emerged not because of concern for the well-being of workers in poor countries, but as projectionist moves aimed against growing and competitively-princed imports from the South, Dr. Mahathir.'

He added that to compound this unfair interpretation of the multilateral trade rules, when it came to technology transfer, Northern countries take a fiercely anti-liberal stand, insisting that all WTO member states compulsorily introduce a set of national laws to protect intellectual property rights.

'Since most patents are owned by the North, this in effect means legal protection of their technological monopoly and a drastic curtailment of the right of developing countries to have access to new technology.

'It appears therefore that the Northern interpretation of "free trade" and "liberalization" are slogans that in reality mean liberalization when it benefits the North but protectionism if it can block the South.

'Thus while goods and capital are permitted and encouraged to move around the globe, labor and technology may not.'

Dr. Mahathir also attacked unilateralism, stating that 'even as we are asked to submit to GATT rules and the WTO, we find one country blatantly undermining the WTO by enacting extra-territorial laws which must be submitted to by all nations and their companies on pains of ex-communication.

The prime minister criticized the inadequacy of the intellectual property rights regime in the WTO, saying that: 'The GATT agreement also fails to protect the genetic resources of the South whilst allowing energetically modified materials to be patented.

'We now have a situation where theft of genetic resources by Western biotech TNCs enables them to make huge profits by producing patented genetic mutations of these same materials. What depths have we sunk to in the global market place when nature's gifts to the poor may not be protected but their modifications by the rich become exclusive property.'

Dr. Mahathir said there are many gainers and losers in the world of the WTO, 'but we are concerned that the major losers will once again be the poorest and most marginalised countries.'

A few countries like Malaysia had benefited from the Round, he said, but pointed out that these gains had been through thrift, productivity and ingenuity of the people, and that Malaysia's new-found prosperity had also benefited rich countries.

Nothing that 'globalization' had become a buzzword, with the G7 communiqué touting it as the source of hope for the future, Dr. Mahathir said that some would however argue that globalization (with its aim of breaking down borders and sucking countries into a single economic entity) had eclipsed multiateralism.

'If the current behavior of the rich countries is anything to go by, globalization simply means the breaking down of the orders of countries so that those with the capital and the goods will be free to dominate the markets,' he said.

'Colonies in the former British Empire will remember "imperial preference" when they were made the exclusive markets of the metropolitan power. Globalization can mean just that, except that the world market will belong to the rich nations.

'Linkages to non-trade issue swill prevent the poor from even challenging the rich, in the same way the colonies were not allowed to industrialize.'

Dr. Mahathir added that the pre-eminence of transitional forces had blurred the definition of national sovereignty. 'We must seriously question why a powerful minority are still allowed to bankrupt and coerce the majority to meet their narrow economic and political ends.

'The poor are no longer independent. They have already lost control over their own currency. And now they have lost their borders too.'

Dr. Mahathir said every year, many statements were made at the UN lamenting the crises of poverty, debt, human right abuse, conflicts and wars. Yet nothing much had been done.

'Perhaps it is the mismanagement by government of so many poor countries which afford many excuses for the rich not to help.'

The prime minister concluded that it was easy to use the UN as a forum to unmask the hypocrisies of both the North and the South, but it was more difficult to work collectively to implement change and solve problems.

Still, Malaysia believed this repetitive criticism is valid and necessary, and also strongly believed in the multilateralism of the UN and was prepared to invest in it.

(Courtesy Third World Network Features)



Finance and Economics

The Unmeasurable Lightness of Being

Economic statistics can cause governments to lose elections or wipe billions off share prices. Unfortunately, many of the numbers are wrong.

There are three kinds of economists: those who can count and those who can't." That old joke gets a good laugh at economics conferences, yet it cuts dangerously close to the bone. Economists spend much time churning statistics through computer models or using them to justify policy, but few worry about the reliability of those numbers. They ought to: traditional measures of economic performance are becoming increasingly dodgy.

Number-crunching is not just an academic issue. Important questions, such as why all the billions of dollars invested in computers have failed to boost productivity growth, rest upon the accuracy of official statistics. Faulty figures distort people's vision. America's economic debate, for example, has been shaped partly by official numbers showing that productivity growth has slowed — from an annual rate of 2.6% in 1960-73 to 0.9% in 1980-95 — and that real wages have stagnated. Calculate those figures correctly, however, and America's true rate of productivity growth in the 1990s could be almost as high as in the 1960s, while real wages could be rising at a respectable pace.

The question of the reliability of official statistics will get a public airing in America early next month, when a commission headed by Michael Boskin, an economist, issues a report to the Senate Finance Committee on the consumer-price index (CPI). It is expected to conclude that the CPI has overstated annual inflation in recent years by 1-2 percentage points. This, in turn, implies that real growth in GDP and productivity has been understated, since a variant of the CPI is used to create inflation-adjusted figures. This is no small matter: if the CPI overstates inflation, the budget deficit swells because of the over-indexation of welfare benefits, government pensions and income-tax brackets. If America's inflation rate is overstated by just one percentage point a year, then after ten years this would add an estimated $140 billion to its federal budget deficit.

In recent years, governments have made big efforts to improve the accuracy, timeliness and integrity of the statistics they collect. But are the number they collect relevant? Far too man statisticians are still trying to me the output of the 19th century rather than the wizardry of the 21th. There powerful forces pose special challenges to traditional statistics

* **Globalization.** A growing portion of trade and investment fleets internal decisions made by multinational corporations. This makes it harder to define nation economic performance. Is Germany's economy measured best by icluding Volkswagen production abroad but excluding Ford's output in Germany? Some economists would argue that it is. But this would change the economic picture dramatically — and would instantly give America a trade surplus instead of a deficit.

* **Invisibility.** Conventional statistics were originally devised for tracking the production of physical goods. But a growing slice of output consists not of material thing but the production and manipulation of ideas. Output has become less visible, and hence less measurable. The number crunches have failed to keep pace. They still churn out masses of figures on the lamb population still output or sales of "rubber and misce laneo is plastic products". Yet fast-growing sections such as software, telecommunications, entertainment, health care and financial service barely tracked. In fields such as education and finance government statistics often assume that output simply rises in line with the number of hours worked. Thus, by definition, productivity never rises.

* **Technology.** New goods shorter produce cycles and rapid quality improvement make it harder to measure changes in output and prices over time. Isn't it great that faster recover times from operation mean patients spend less time in hospital. Not from a statistician's point of view: measured by occupancy of hospital beds output would show a decline. A road-haulage firm might improve its service by using computer navigation to run its lorries more efficiently. But productivity measured by tonne-miles would drop if lorries read their destinations more directly.

The problem here is insoluble. To mean sure the increase in real output over time, it is necessary to define a unit of production. This is easy for basic goods, such as tonnes of steel, but for a growing slice of economy the concept of a unit of output is becoming increasingly fuzzy. As long as that is true, statistics will fail to capture many of the advances in the modern economy.

The share of the economy that can be measured accurately is dwindling. Zvi Griliches, an economist at Harvard University, points out that in 1947 half of America's output was accounted for by farming, mining or manufacturing and so was relatively easy to measure. Today these sectors account for less than 30% of output. And even manufacturing is becoming trickier to track as shorter product cycles and more rapid improvements in quality have made traditional measures less reliable.

Yet governments have been slow to examine the problem. There have been pathetically few studies that try to assess the size of measurement errors, and virtually all of those have been in America. Anecdotal evidences suggests that measurement problems in Europe and other regions of the globe are just as severe.

The long and the short of cybernomics

If the measurement bias were constant over time, it might not matter. But the margin of time, it might no matter. But the margin of error is widening. Rapid technological change and the expansion of the so-called "intangible economy" has exacerbated the problem of adjusting for quality changes, and for new goods and services. Many goods did not exist two yeas ago, let alone ten years ago. This makes it hard to compare products over time, and thus declines in price (and gains in output) are missed. In computers, for instance, the average life of a model is now less than 12 months. Some 30% of consumer-electronics sales are products that did not exist a year earlier.

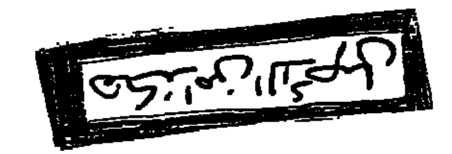
Moreover, standard economic statistics fail to capture many of the benefits of information technology, which increasingly take the form not of cost saving or greater volume, but of improved quality, time saving, convenience and increased consumer choice. Banking with a machine rather than a human teller can save customers both time and anguish. Neither benefit will appear in countries' national accounts.

Leonard Nakamura, an economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, argues that if full account is taken of the benefits to consumers of new goods, services and product improvements, then GDP growth may have been understated by as much as 2-3 percentage points a year. After ten years, that would leave America's official GDP one-third smaller than he true GDP. The degree of mismeasurement has been far higher since 1974, Mr Nakamura says. That could account for almost all the productivity slowdown in America since 1974. Luc Soete, an economist at the University of Limburg, in the Netherlands, reckons that the margin of error in Europe's growth rate is probably just as large.

If productivity and real incomes are growing faster than the official figures say, does this mean that governments can sit back and relax? Far from it. Better policies would still yield an even better performance. What it does suggest, however, is that the correct politics may not be those than are signaled by the flawed statistics.

Statisticians face a big challenge in trying to boost the quality of their own production. There is certainly room for improvement. However, it is probably an unavoidable, if ironic, fact that in the so-called information age, when super computers crunch mountains of data and satellites can track the precise movements of every man or machine, people's knowledge about the economy may be less exact than it was back when adding machines ruled the earth.

(Courtesy the Economist)



Koala Bears Have Fingerprints Similar to Humans'



The happiest bear in the frozen north juggles a rare toy, a tire from an equipment cache near Churchill. After besting a rival bear for the tire, this comedian later draped it around its neck. Said photographer Norbert Rosing: "I was laughing so hard my vehicle shook" On Alaska's North Slope in November 1993, the village of Kaktovik suffered some bizarre vandalism. Dozens of lights illuminating the village airstrip were destroyed – knocked out by polar bears. Tracks in the snow showed the bears were methodically moving from one light to the next. On another occasion witnesses saw them punching the lights one by one. Was this aggression, or were the lights just playthings glowing irresistibly in the night? Will any scientist ever know? Sometimes animals seem to play even with them.

LONDON – Koala bears, the slow-moving Australian marsupials that live on eucalyptus leaves, have fingerprints so human-like they could easily be confused with those of offenders at the scene of a crime, says a report published here recently.

"Although it's extremely unlikely that koala prints would be found at the scene of a crime, police should at least be aware of the possibility," wrote a biological anthropologist and forensic scientist at Australia's Adelaide University in this week's *New Scientist* magazine.

While handling koalas in the Urimbirra Wildlife Park in southern Australia, Maciej Henneberg noticed their fingers carried ridged patterns of loops, whorls and arches like those on a human hand.

He was surprised to find no reference to the patterns in the scientific literature.

Henneberg and a team of colleagues compared fingerprints from koalas, chimpanzees and humans using a scanning electron microscope.

They found that even chimps, the animals most closely related to humans, did not have prints as human-like as the koala.

Henneberg believes the findings are of evolutionary importance.

"Marsupials such as the koala split from the lineage of primates about 80 million years ago," he said. "So we have two lineages independently developing the same trait."

He thought fingerprints evolved as a device to improve grip while climbing, he wrote in the *New Scientist*. (AFP)

Italian Sets Priest Ablaze Over Failed Marriage

ROME – An Italian man told police he poured petrol over a priest and set him ablaze because he blamed him for his failed marriage, media reports said recently.

Pierfrancesco Caratelli, 28, was arrested and charged with attempted murder for the attack on Father Mario Torregrossa.

Torregrossa, 52, is in a serious condition in hospital with burns to 40% of his body after being attacked by a masked assailant in his Roman Catholic Church in Atilia, near Rome.

Caratelli, who was married by Torregrossa but reportedly split up with his wife within months, was arrested after police found in his home the petrol can and shoes the priest remembered seeing in the attack. Newspapers said he was believed to have carried out other petrol attacks since his marriage break-up.

He told police Torregrossa had failed to help him get back together with his wife.

"One day he even refused me communion. He was persecuting me and I punished him," Italian television quoted him as telling police.

The priest, who has undergone surgery and is on a ventilator, has forgiven his attacker from his hospital bed. (Reuter)

Channel Service Filled With Smoke in 1995 Incident

LONDON – Channel Tunnel operator Eurotunnel had no set procedures to deal with "dense exhaust smoke" which covered 15 miles (24 kilometers) of the France-Britain link's service tunnel in an incident last year, said a report published here recently.

All train services should have been suspended during the incident involving a diesel-powered service tunnel vehicle, said the official report by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on railway safety for 1995/96.

The HSE report came a day after Eurostar passenger trains resumed service after a devastating fire in the tunnel last month.

It is the service tunnel which is seen as the "safe haven" into which passengers can be evacuated if there is an incident in the two train tunnels.

But "the presence of dense smoke in the service tunnel (in the 1995 incident) had never been envisaged," said the HSE.

"While the smoke was not toxic, all trains should have been suspended because of the loss of the safe haven. Since their rules did not cover this eventuality, Eurotunnel continued to operate a normal night service."

The HSE report said Eurotunnel had since carried out a complete review and had amended its emergency procedures.

The incident took place on the night of September 17-18, 1995, while regular maintenance was being carried out in the tunnel.

The vehicle developed a fault in its exhaust system which resulted in "dense smoke being emitted into the service tunnel from mid-point to the United Kingdom portal, a distance of 25 kilometers (15 miles)."

The report said it was some two hours before the ventilation system "had been reconfigured to clear the smoke". (AFP)

Gold From Italy in 1944

By sending 23 tons of gold to Switzerland in 1944, Mussolini was paying back loans made before the war by a consortium of Swiss banks and the Bank for International Settlements. While it might conceivably have been looted gold, that is not likely.

On September 20 1943, ten days after the Germans occupied Rome in response to the fall of Mussolini, SS-Colonel Herbert Kappler, together with his right-hand man SS-Major Karl Hass, had his parachute shock troops surround the headquarters of the Banca d'Italia in the Palazzo Koch on the Via Nazionale. The Germans loaded 120 tons – some sources put it at 100 tons – of the Italian gold reserves onto trucks and transported it to Milan, where the ingots were stored in the regional branch of the national bank under German supervision. To this day it remains unclear just who gave Kappler the order to steal the gold. According to one hypothesis, the operation was carried out on the instructions of Reichsbank President Walther Funk in Berlin and his representative in Rome, Reichsbank Director Maximilian Bernhuber. Another version holds a certain Dollmann responsible; he was SS-Reichsfuehrer Henrich Himmer's personal envoy in Italy. The Banca d'Italia offered no resistance to the German raid on its gold reserves. On the contrary; Governor Vincenzo Azzolini agreed to it. After the cease-fire and the division of Italy, Azzolini had taken sides not with the Badoglio government in the south, controlled by the Allies, but the fascist puppet state in northern Italy under Salo. The Bank for International Settlements (BIS), in Basel, had had investments totaling about 75 million Swiss francs in Italy since the early 1930s. At that time, this amount corresponded to about 16 tons of gold, which was held by the Banca d'Italia and secured by a gold clause. After the Anglo-American invasion of Sicily in the summer of 1943, the BIS had sent word from Basel that it would like to get back its investments from the Banca d'Italia in the form of those 16 tons of gold – an attempt that proved unsuccessful. After communications between Basel and Rome were broken, the Italian secretary general of the BIS, Raffaele Pilotti, set out in late November 1943 for Rome, where arrived a week later after a perilous journey. Pilotti was warmly received in the Palazzo Koch. Governor Azzolini promised to send the gold as quickly as possible to Switzerland and gave Pilotti a 60-page list of the numbers and the precision weight of the gold ingots, which he had signed over to the BIS and placed in the vaults of the Banca d'Italia until they could be shipped. At the same time, though, Azzolini made it clear that the gold would not be transported from Italy to Switzerland unless the Reichsbank gave the green light.

Once the issues of the BIS had been settled, Governor Azzolini showed the man from Basel an urgent message from the Swiss National Bank to the Banca d'Italia. The SNB was asking for the immediate repayment of a 53-million-franc loan with which a Swiss banking consortium had financed Italian state industry before the war. Like the BIS investments, this, too, was secured by a gold clause. Azzolini asked Pilotti to go see Swiss National Bank President Ernest Weber in Zurich to inform him that the Banca d'Italia was willing to send 7 tons of gold to Switzerland for the SNB in addition to the 16 tons for the BIS. Satisfied, the BIS secretary general returned to Basel.

On December 23 1943, Pilotti did indeed meet with Ernest Weber, president of the SNB, to tell him about the complicated situation in Italy. He also gave Weber some good advice about how the gold might be obtained, and from then on, the BIS and the SNB coordinated their efforts to recover investments and loans they had in Italy. With the help of the German BIS General Director Paul Hechler (National Socialist Party member number 7,686,661), Pilotti got in touch with Reichsbank President Walther Funk in Berlin and asked for his support in Italy. Funk agreed tot eh repayment to the BIS and the SNB with the Italian gold. In January 1944, Funk sent his deputy, Emil Puhl, to see Azzolini in Moltrasio on Lake Como; the fascist government had moved the Banca d'Italia there to keep it safe from the Allies, who were closing in on Rome. In Moltrasio, Azzolini and Puhl decided on the particulars of transporting the gold to Chiasso, in Switzerland just over the Italian border.

There was one person who did not agree with transferring this gold to Switzerland, though: Pellegrini, Finance Minister of the fascist government in Brescia. He succeeded in persuading the German guards around the Milan offices of the Banca d'Italia to disregard the instructions sent by Azzolini and Puhl. The shipment to Switzerland planned for February 1944 never took place. Instead, the gold reserves were transported under still unexplained circumstances from Milan to Fortezza, a fort for the Austrians had carved out of the rock in the 1830s near Bressanone (Brixen), South Tyrol.

Pilotti did not let this setback discourage him. In February 1944 he returned to Moltrasio to see Azzolini, who promised to do everything in his power to have the more than 23 tons of gold shipped to Chiasso. Pilotti then continued south to Brescia to see fascist Finance Minister Pellegrini. As things developed, Azzolini was able to prevail over Pellegrini, and four freight cars from Fortezza arrived on April 20 loaded with 23.3 tons of gold.

From a purely legal point of view, no one could object to the claims that the BIS and the consortium of Swiss banks had on the Banca d'Italia, backed as they were by a gold clause in the contract. But it is quite another question whether it was politically wise for them, shortly before the complete collapse of the fascist dictatorship, to secure these Italian investments and loans that had helped Mussolini before the war. This gold was kept out of the hands of the Allies and thus, in a certain sense, withheld from Italy as it reconstructed after the war. By using Azzolini's lists, somebody could presumably determine whether the gold from Fortezza had been looted – if those lists themselves were available.

In 1941, Italy had, together with Germany, looted the Yugoslavian gold reserves, so it cannot be completely ruled out that such gold was also used to pay the BIS and the SNB. It does appear unlikely though, since by April 1944 it was only a matter of time until Mussolini's puppet government collapsed, and by shipping looted gold to Switzerland, Governor Azzolini would have needlessly exposed himself to the risks of later being exposed as a gold thief.

To this very day it remains unknown how much gold was in Fortezza at the end of the war and where it is now. So unsurprisingly, innumerable stories and rumors have grown up around the legendary treasure at Fortezza (Franzensfeste) in South Tyrol. Luigi Einaudi, the governor of the Banca d'Italia has never been able to present clear documentary proof of this official version. At the moment, the Roman military investigating magistrate Antonio Intelisano is trying to shine some light into the gloom surround this mysterious gold story.

(Courtesy Swiss Review of World Affairs)

Australian Tragedy at the Heartbreak Hotel

DARWIN, Australia – A man was found dead on the roof of his pick-up truck and his severely dehydrated companion rescued after they became stranded without fuel in the searing outback near here, police said recently.

The two, who were not immediately identified, were stranded for only 24 hours, but they had no drinking water in a temperature of 46 degrees Celsius (115 degrees Fahrenheit), Sergeant Keith Currie said.

Currie said the men were traveling from the Northern Territory's Limmen Bight River to Borroloola, more than 670 kilometers (420 miles) southeast of here, when they became short of diesel.

They attempted a detour towards a roadhouse known as the Heartbreak Hotel but ran out of fuel about 30 kilometers (20 miles) short.

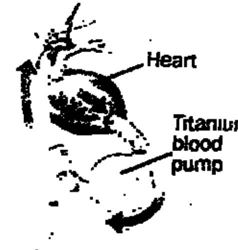
They waited there until the next day before the driver of a passing vehicle gave them some fuel but it appeared there were further mechanical difficulties and the vehicle went no further, Currie said.

The younger man died and the older man attempted to walk to the Heartbreak Hotel. He was found 10 kilometers (six miles) from the pick-up.

Currie said the incident showed it was imperative for travelers to carry sufficient fuel and water supplies, adding: "There is real potential danger in terms of loss of life traveling in remote areas without adequate water." (AFP)







Can Multiple Sclerosis Be Cured?

PART III

But I was still uncertain whether cannabis was responsible.

Cannabis was something I used for fun, a social drug. I did not believe that such a simple and safe drug could produce such a startling improvement. It was all the easier to ignore the obvious because my doctor and my wife continued to laugh at the idea. To show myself that it was not really the cannabis that was helping, I decided to stop smoking yet again. At first gradually and then more rapidly, the muscle spasms returned.

Within a few weeks I needed a cane, then a walker. Eventually I was bedridden again. After four months I decided to start smoking again. My condition immediately stabilized, then began to improve. I was happy but very confused.

This pattern continued. I would smoke cannabis until my condition improved, then stop. For reasons I cannot explain, I found it hard to believe that cannabis was really the cause of these dramatic changes in my health.

In 1980 my brother showed me a newspaper article about an MS patient in Washington named Sam Diana who had convinced a court of law that his use of cannabis was a "medical necessity." I was astonished to learn that I was not the only MS patient getting relief from cannabis. It was even more astonishing that doctors, researchers, and other MS patients had supported Mr. Diana's claim and the court had ruled in his favor.

I no longer felt the need to prove to myself or anyone else that cannabis was helpful; I started listening to my body and went back to smoking regularly.

For the past seven years my MS has been well controlled, except when I run out of cannabis and cannot find or afford more.

Most MS patients grow progressively weaker and more crippled; I have improved. I can stand on one foot with my eyes closed. I walk completely unaided. I can actually run!

This may seem insignificant to someone who has never been bedridden, crippled, and unable to move or speak, but to me it is a miracle. On top of all that, cannabis allows me to be sexually potent.

I have never become chemically dependent on cannabis, and I have no withdrawal symptoms when I stop smoking. Compared to the steroids, tranquilizers, and sedatives usually prescribed for MS patients, cannabis is remarkably safe and benign.

My doctor is amazed by the improvement in my symptoms. On a scale of one to 100, he rates my physical and mental health at 95. He no longer insists that cannabis is useless. At the end of our last meeting he looked me in the eye and told me to keep doing whatever it is I am doing, because it works.

I do not like breaking the law. I do not enjoy paying terribly inflated prices to drug dealers for an unregulated, uncontrolled product. But I do like to walk, talk, read, write, and see. My doctor and I are now exploring the possibility of gaining legal access to cannabis through the Food and Drug Administration's "Compassionate LND" program, despite the extraordinarily slow and complicated procedure required.

Compared to the steroids, tranquilizers, and sedatives usually prescribed for MS patients, my discovery is remarkably safe and benign.

Most MS patients in the United States now learn about cannabis through support groups or The Grapevine. Many anecdotes testify to its capacity to relieve tremors and loss of muscle coordination. Neurologists often hear about it from their patients. Yet the medical literature includes only a few cases like the following one reported in 1983.

A 30-year-old man had a ten-year history of MS consisting of exacerbations and remissions, resulting, in paraparesis, diplopia, ataxia, numbness and parasthesia in all extremities, urinary retention, incontinence, and impotence.

Medical treatments had included ACTH, corticosteroids, and azathioprine. A disabling tremor had been a consistent problem for more than a year. The tremor was maximal in the head and neck and resulted in particular problems while eating, because it increased as efforts were made to put food in the mouth. The tremor was diminished, but not abolished, when the patient was supine with his head fully supported. It disappeared with sleep. Treatment with diazepam, alcohol, propranolol, and physostigmine were uniformly unsuccessful. Cannabis had been used to control the tremor on an almost daily basis for at least one year prior to this study without evidence of diminishing response.

The initial 5 mg dose of THC resulted in a decrease in head and neck tremor within 30 to 60 minutes which lasted approximately six hours. The dose resulted in a very mild "high" which did not appear to impair judgment. Mild hand ataxia seen in finger-nose-finger testing was little changed, but the patient's ability to write was considerably improved, and his use of eating utensils was markedly improved. When placebo capsules were substituted no improvement occurred in spite of a "high" sensation.

Repeated testing with the active drug on two occasions again demonstrated the response.

Another recent report was published by neurologists at the University of Gottingen in Germany, who noticed that one of their patients, a 30-year-old man with multiple sclerosis, used (smoked) cannabis to treat his motor and sexual handicaps. They tested him with clinical ratings, electromyographic study of his leg reflexes, and electromagnetic recording of his hand tremors. Their conclusion was that cannabis warranted further evaluation as a treatment for both muscle spasms and ataxia (loss of coordination).

Debbi Talshir is a 39-year-old divorced woman who has treated her multiple sclerosis with cannabis for 14 years. She tells her story:

I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1977. One of its first symptoms was optic neuropathy. The optic nerve connects the brain and eye, and optic neuropathy is a degeneration of that connection. It can cause partial blindness. First a big cloud appeared in my vision and I could not see so well; the cloud then hit the right eye.

For the neuropathy I was given ACTH. I gained about 100 pounds because I retained water and my appetite increased dramatically (I was always starving). The ACTH also caused mood swings that made me intolerable to my co-workers and friends. Even I was frightened by them. Finally they subsided, only to return a year and a half later, along with the optic neuropathy. This time a co-worker recommended cannabis and I smoked a couple of cigarettes daily. I didn't gain weight or have mood swings, and the optic neuropathy subsided in three weeks.

As the MS progressed, I was given Lioresal (baclofen) for muscle spasms. Yet, it caused side effects: drowsiness and just general lethargy. I found that cannabis stopped the spasms and relaxed my muscles, but not so much that my muscles became useless.

(To be cont'd)

THOUGHT

One who leads people to do good is like one who does it.
(The Holy Prophet Mohammad (S))

PRAYER

Noon	11:56
Evening	17:13
Dawn (tomorrow)	05:25
Sunrise (tomorrow)	07:03

TOMORROW IN HISTORY

1520 - Martin Luther publicly burns the Papal bull excommunicating him from Roman Catholic church.

1756 - Robert Clive takes Fulta, India, and relieves British fugitives.

1810 - Napoleon Bonaparte annexes northern Hanover, Bremen, Hamburg, Lauenburg and Lubeck, Germany.

1877 - Plevna, Bulgaria, falls to Russian army.

1893 - Italians defeat Mahdists attacking Eritrea.

1898 - Treaty of Paris between United States and Spain, ending Spanish-American war, with Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines ceded to United States for $20 million.

1899 - British forces are defeated at Stromberg, South Africa.

1936 - King Edward VIII of Britain abdicates, becoming Duke of Windsor.

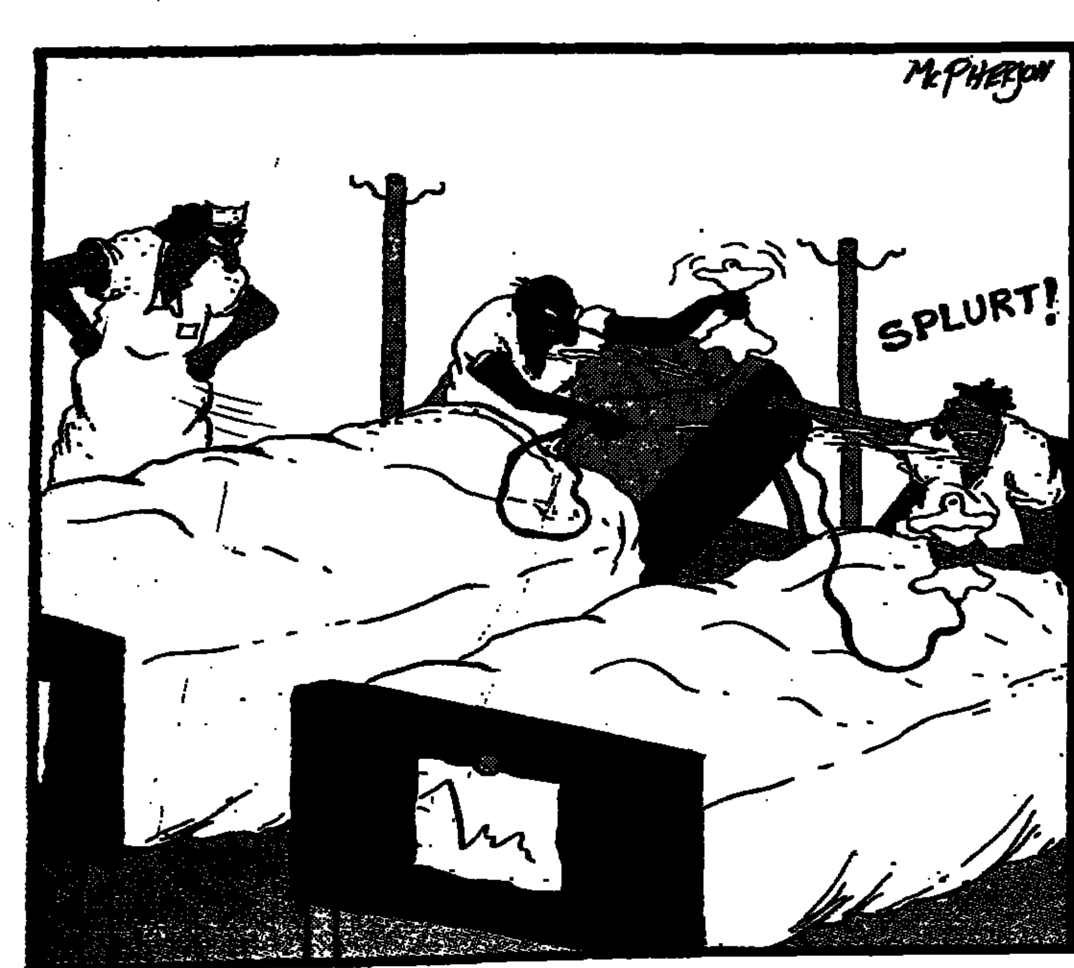
1948 - UN General Assembly adopts convention of genocide and human rights.

1992 - Troops open fire on a truckload of Somalis who barreled through a French checkpoint, killing two and injuring seven in the first bloodshed of the U.S.-led military mission in Somalia.

1993 - ANC leader Nelson Mandela says he and President F. W. de Klerk are bound by the Nobel Peace Prize they accepted, to spend the rest of their lives building a democratic, non-racial South Africa.

CLOSE TO HOME

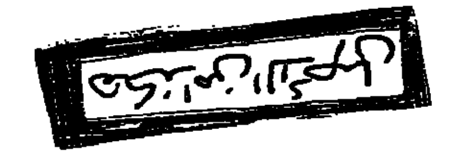
BY JOHN McPHERSON



"Mr. Grant! Mr. Marinello! Stop it *right now*, or no sponge bath for either of you!"



Having spotted the approaching IRS agent, Rodney hurried the family into the tax shelter.



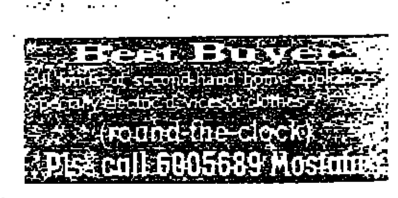
IN THE NAME OF ALLAH

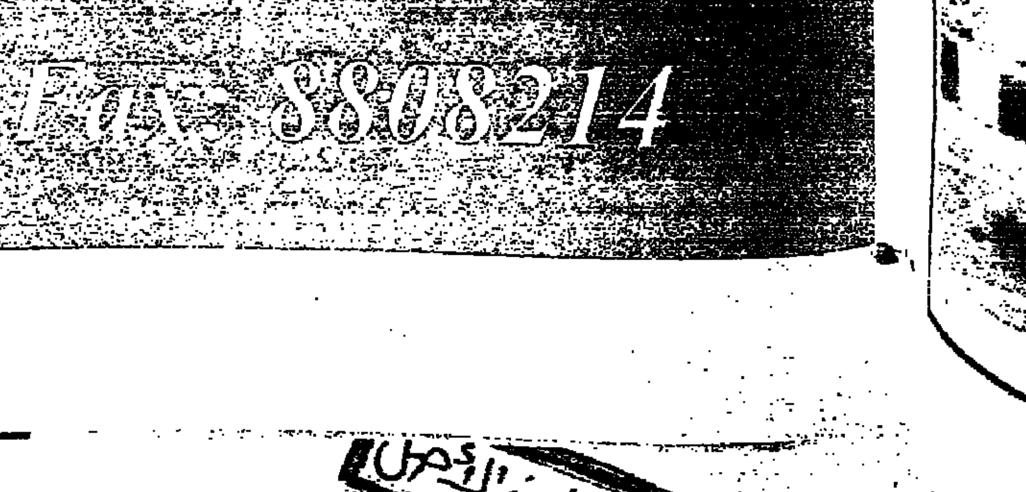
EXTENSION OF CLOSING DATE

TENDER NO. 74/31

THE ABOVE-MENTIONED TENDER IS HEREBY EXTENDED FOR ONE MONTH. THE SUBMISSION DATE OF ENVELOPES IS THE OFFICIAL CLOSING TIME ON THURSDAY DEC. 19, 1996 AND THE ENVELOPES OPENING DATE IS AT 9:00 A.M. ON SUNDAY DEC. 22, 1996 AT TELECOMMUNICATIONS CO. OF IRAN, TRANSACTION COMMITTEE, 2ND FLOOR, BLDG NO. 5, DR. SHARIATI AVE.

DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR FOR FINANCE, PROCUREMENT & MANPOWER
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY OF IRAN





Largest [illegible] Inaugurated in [illegible]



Engineer Cheraghi, director general for Khuzestan Province Cooperatives elaborates on the complex and the province to the attendants.

Khuzestan Aluminum Industries Complex was inaugurated by Minister of Cooperatives Engineer Shafei. Also attendant in the opening ceremony were deputies from the Ministry of Cooperatives, Governor General of Khuzestan Province Engineer Moqimi, representative of Vali-e Faqih in Khuzestan Ayatollah Mousavi Jazayeri, governors general, mayors, directors general, heads of offices, officials and authorities of trade unions and guilds, members of Board of Directors for national union for the industries, and managers of different industries.

Mr. Abdolhossein Khalilavi, managing director of Khuzestan Aluminum Production Industries Company (KAPIC) took part in an interview with the reporters to elaborate more:

This complex which is the first and the largest manufacturer of aluminum structures in the country, is constructed in a land area of 35,000 sq.m and with a built area of 15,000 sq.m. It includes 40 units for producing doors and windows, kitchen cabinets, wall-mounting cupboards, indoor door frames, false ceilings, and other aluminum structures. The capacity of the complex is 200 tons per month.

On the offsite units of this complex, the managing director of the complex said: The complex also includes a research and design unit; and plans have been made to create an exposition, a restaurant, amphitheater, and a large center for distribution of raw materials near the complex.

He added: The complex, manned by 390 employees, deserves the highest production rate among the complexes of this kind.

He revealed that executors of construction designs can refer to this complex to purchase best quality raw materials easily. The complex also accepts orders from all parts of the country.

He said none of the centralized productive complexes deserve this much capacity and the scattered and traditional producers use old methods, by which raw materials and valuable economic resources are wasted. Turning them into the modern methods is a necessity which should be supported by the responsible authorities.

Concerning the amount of investment in the complex Mr. Khalilavi said: So far Rls. 6 billion has been invested in the complex but an additional Rls. 10 billion is also needed for the completion of the plans under progress.

The managing director of the complex added: The complex invites all institutes willing to participate in the field, to contact (061) 77007 or write to P.O.Box 547 Ahvaz.

Also at the opening ceremony, Minister of Cooperatives Engineer Shafei appreciated the endeavors made by the members of the union and the managing director of the complex to create such an association and said such a goal might not be achieved unless by right understanding of one's status. He also acknowledged all members of trade guilds, management of the complex and the executive directors of the province.



Minister of Cooperatives Engineer Shafei and some provincial officials attendant in the opening ceremony of Khuzestan Aluminum Industries Complex.

For making further improvements in the complex he suggested two things: First, a vocational and technical training center be established beside the complex to train skilled manpower for the technical and industrial centers of the country. He recommended all the educated individuals to enter productive sector and do not always think about working in the offices and governmental sector. Unfortunately, in our society people's awareness of the culture of labor and production is low. In the old system, it was still lower, but in the new system of the country people are gaining labor culture awareness. Second, production of such items as doors, windows, cupboards, tables, chairs and other products should be according to the requirements of national and international standards. By standardizing the products you can offer guidelines for the building construction industry. Also you will help people a lot if you set up exhibits and stores throughout the country to avoid people to refer in person to the complex.

The aluminum false ceiling, which is both decorative and absorber of sonic frequencies, is produced by Khuzestan Aluminum Industries Complex.

Furthermore, Ayatollah Mousavi Jazayeri, Friday Prayer leader of Ahvaz and representative of Vali-e Faqih referred to the value of labor in Islam adding: All should work, as prophets of God used to work.

He also appreciated the hard-working personnel and responsible authorities of Aluminum Guild and Engineer Shafei's supports.

Likewise, Engineer Cheraghi, director general for Khuzestan General Office for Cooperatives elaborated first on the province saying: Khuzestan Province, with a land area of 64236 sq.km and a population of almost 3,680,000 people is located in the southwest Iran, sandwiched between Ilam Province from the northwest, Lorestan Province from the north, Charmahal & Bahkteyari and Kohgilouyeh & Boyer Ahmad from northeast and east, Bushehr Province from southeast, Persian Gulf from the south. Furthermore it is bordering Iraq from the west.

According to state divisions Khuzestan Province includes 15 townships, 28 cities, 35 districts, and 111 hamlets. Ahvaz, the province center of Khuzestan with a land area of over 200 sq.km, is the largest city of the province. Five rivers namely Karkheh, Karoon, Dez, Maroon, and Kheyrabad, run across the province. The average annual rainfall rate is 266mm in the province and the rainfall period is between Mehr-Ordibehesht.

Elsewhere, Engineer Cheraghi referred to the number of the cooperatives established in the province and said: The total number of the cooperatives in the province exceeds 2,560 units, 600 of which established in 1992, the year the general office was formed. The cooperative companies member some 530,000 people. And the total number of cooperatives in the province are eight and the number of the multipurpose cooperative companies stand at 25 mainly membered by the devotees of war.

In 1995 the total credit allocated to the province according to Note 3, had been 3,360,000,000. Almost 108 cooperative companies were active in production and service sectors manned by 1171 members. The credit allocated according to Note 3 this year is 50 billion rials. It is predicted that using the credit, 150 plans be implemented in the province to create 1,800 job opportunities.

The complex produces [illegible] tons of aluminum doors, windows, kitchen cabinets and indoor frames per month.

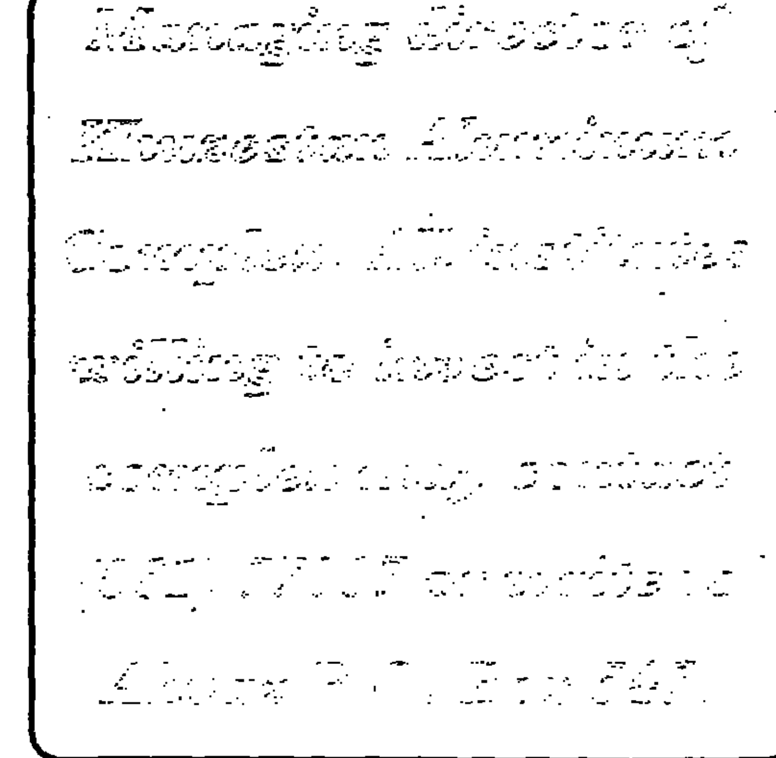
The anticipated credit is mainly for industry, mines, agriculture, shrimp and services sectors.

Another plan, on the agenda of the cooperative sector is wiping out the disturbing urban industries. Khuzestan Aluminum Production Complex has taken the first step in this regard. Almost 40 scattered units in the cities of the province have been assembled within a complex.

Concerning procurement of aluminum for the related industries the complex has met the needs of the other provinces to the aluminum as well. Such a success deserves due appreciation.

Managing director of Khuzestan Aluminum Complex: All institutes willing to invest in the complex may contact (061) 77007 or write to Ahvaz P.O.Box 547.

Mr. Khalilavi managing director of Khuzestan Aluminum Complex: Commissioners of construction designs nationwide can refer to the complex to procure their raw material in best quality and reasonable prices.



Managing director of Khuzestan Aluminum Complex: All institutes willing to invest in the complex may contact (061) 77007 or write to Ahvaz P.O.Box 547.



Minister of Cooperatives Engineer Shafei inaugurates Khuzestan Aluminum Industries Complex.



Code Constructors

When *PC Magazine* first reviewed C++ compilers back in 1992, C++ reigned supreme on the desktop development stage, responsible for GUI development, databases, spreadsheets and most of the operating system itself. Today, it's still the case that most PC software you can buy is built in C++ (usually Microsoft Visual C++), which runs everything, from the fantasy combat of DOOM! through to real missiles.

There have been challengers for this pivotal position. In the last couple of years Visual Basic and PowerBuilder have taken much GUI work away, but their lack of scaleability and performance has led to C++ being used to build DLLs that provide both access to the power of the API and a much needed performance boost. Assembler, used for a few specialist tasks, has faded greatly, although Symantec's linker highlights the advantages if key components are optimized by its judicious use. Fortran has declined too, although perversely, demand for COBOL is increasing because of the frantic need to fix all those bugs caused by the miscoding of the year 2000.

Java – Friend or Foe?

The last cloud on C++'s horizon is Java, which offers smoother portability, a simpler object model and the all-important CV enhancement of being an integral component for both Intranets and the Internet. But this threat is also an opportunity, since the Java language is very similar to C++, being borne of Objective C, as well as being influenced by C++.

Most of the vendors with products in this review have Java solutions in the offing, partly because of the effect of Internet products on share price, and because it's relatively simple for an existing C++ vendor to implement. This was never so clear than with Microsoft's implementation, which leveraged so much that early versions announced themselves on your screen as Visual C++. Meanwhile, Borland has taken the smart decision to bundle its Java solution with Borland C++, making this a serious choice if you want to improve your personal marketability.

Although Windows 95 has sold in the tens of millions, it hasn't proved popular as a development platform. The most objective view of this comes from the employment market, where Windows NT development jobs greatly outnumber those for Windows 95. This reflects the fact that corporate UK is embracing Windows NT, whereas Windows 95 is seen as a consumer product. Developers also tend to prefer the stability and relative elegance of NT.

C++ has grown to become the PC's most common professional development language, despite the efforts of Visual Basic and PowerBuilder to oust it. And Microsoft Visual C++ is still the most popular of C++ compilers. But is it actually the best at writing bug-free code that doesn't take a lifetime to compile?

Gobbling Space

The data inflation experienced by users of application software is mirrored by the tools that are used to develop them. So-called minimal installations for Microsoft Visual C++ 4.1 or Symantec C++ 7.2 can take up between 20Mb and 250Mb, while for IBM's VisualAge for C++ for Windows this rises to nearly 0.5Gb.

None of these tools can be used effectively under Windows NT on any machine below a 100MHz Pentium with less than 16Mb of RAM. Even this configuration will meant hat programmers drum their fingers waiting for compiles to finish. Given the cost of a programmer relative to the now trivial price of RAM, it makes no financial sense to use even this unproductively low specification.

At first glance these numbers look fairly horrific to people who remember when you could a working Microsoft C program on a single floppy disk. However, the cost of the disk space works out at about £50, which is less than Microsoft C would have cost to house on a 40Mb hard disk at that time. For this bulk you get context-sensitive help, debug tools, programmable editors, configuration management, installation toolkits, thousands of APIs and even chunks of code written by the tools.

Helping Hand

All the products in this review have some form of automatic code generation, so you don't have to laboriously crack your own messages and map variables to controls by hand. Many development shops simply refuse to use these, partly out of a feeling that they want to be close to the code, and partly because not only is the generated code often verbose, but quite inflexible too. For instance, in most cases any change beyond adding a few fields requires you rerun the Wizard or Expert. This means that you have to migrate any handwritten modifications into the new version, which can greatly reduce the time savings made by using the tools in the first place.

C++ is notorious for creating unfathomable bugs. The combination of virtual functions with operator overloading means that in any large application it simply isn't possible to look at a line of code and be able to deduce for certain which functions will be called. You can prevent some of these problems by referring to the browser, but this won't help you with unassigned pointers, excessive casting, array bound errors, memory leaks or freeing the same object more than once.

A modern development environment helps you to spot these bugs by catching memory exceptions and sack errors, and reference counting. The more tedious logic errors can be traced in all the environments by setting breakpoints, watching the variables, and tracing through until you or the debugger spot a variable with a suspicious value. If your program's failure is rather less deterministic, then you can set the debugger to lie in wait while your program runs normally and pounce only when it steps out of line. The Just In Time (JIT) debuggers, although excellent for such problems, can get a little over enthusiastic, since they act on the failure of any program in your system, not just the one you're working on.

Pushing Performance

The signs are that the C++ market is maturing – there are only four major players, and the performance spread both for compilation and executable speed is narrowing (despite IBM's remarkably poor VisualAge for C++ for Windows, which was some eight times slower than the winner of PC Labs' benchtests). And all the vendors (apart from IBM) have clearly spent at least as much time on the usability of their tools as on code generation.

However, it's increasingly the case that for many developers the most important benchmark isn't the speed of the finished product, but how fast the program produces code. Visual Basic and PowerBuilder wouldn't exist if this weren't true.

Our analysis of the individual products here takes more account of build speed for partial debugs, rather than full builds. This reflects the fact that you do far more tweaking of code than the sort of restructuring that necessitates complete compiles. The overall speed of the executables depends on your mix of floating point to function calls, or how large the v-tables in your class structure need to be.

(Contd on Pg.14)

Construction Works of Tonekabon Guild Affairs Assembly for Distribution and Services Started by Tonekabon Governor



The ceremony of starting construction operations of Tonekabon Guild Affairs Assembly for Distribution and Services

Concurrent with auspicious birth anniversary of Imam Ali (AS), the construction operations of Tonekabon Guild Affairs Assembly for Distribution and Services in a ceremony attended by Noori, Governor of Tonekabon, Nazerian, central district governor, Eftekhari, mayor of Tonekabon, and a number of local authorities and marketeers were started.

The buildings of Guild Affairs Assembly for Distribution and Services and its affiliated unions will be constructed according to proceedings in a piece of land having about 354 square meters area and 270 square meters built area.

Ja'farnezhad: We thank God that we succeeded to achieve two objectives after several years through efforts of devoted representatives of unions in Guild Affairs Assembly for Distribution and Services.

The buildings of Guild Affairs Assembly for Distribution and Services and its affiliated unions of which construction operations were started by Governor Noori and Mayor Eftekhari, will be constructed according to proceedings in a piece of land having about 354 square meters area and 270 square meters built area under the supervision of 5 representatives of unions as main members, one supervisor and some experts.

At the end, he expressed his gratitude to Akbar Shahnazari, Pourmolaee, Ebrahimi, Mehrpour, Ali Dabirian, Fadavi, Akbarian, Asanloo and other marketeers for their cooperation in particular in the field of providing land, planning, map, and method of executing.

Firstly Seyyed Mahdi Ja'farnezhad, head of Tonekabon Guild Affairs Assembly for Distribution and Services delivering speech congratulated on propitious birth anniversary of Imam Ali (AS) as well as Basij Week and then elaborated on the assembly's activities and said, "We thank God that we succeeded to achieve two objectives after several years through efforts of devoted representatives of unions in Guild Affairs Assembly for Distribution and Services.

He added that one of these two objectives was the establishment of Aid Fund which was started its activities with one-million-rial opening capital in 1993 through incessant attempts of marketeers. At present, the fund enjoys 80 members and around 30 million rials stock which we are hopeful to increase in the near future.

Ja'farnezhad went on saying that the buildings of Guild Affairs Assembly for Distribution and Services

Noori: The active presence of marketeers in battlefields and logistic headquarters during 8 years of holy defense is admirable. In fact, the marketeers along with other organizations give all-out support to the combatants.

Then Noori, governor of Tonekabon, congratulated on auspicious birth anniversary of Imam Ali (AS) and Basij Week and briefly delivered speech on Imam Ali's blessing life as well as the marketeers' effective role during 8-year imposed war and construction era and then added, "The active presence of marketeers in battlefields and logistic headquarters during 8 years of holy defense is admirable. In fact, the marketeers along with other organizations give all-out support to the combatants." The governor of Tonekabon added that the marketeers play an important role in construction era as well. They can have strong financial support through creating interest-free loan funds for implementation of construction projects in the region.

Save the UN!



The United Nations is facing a severe financial crisis. It is on the brink of bankruptcy.

The crisis has been brought about by the unwillingness of member-states to pay their dues.

Member-states now owe the organization $2.5 billion. The largest debtor is the United States, which owes $1.44 billion, more than the debts of all the other member-states combined. Another debtor-state is Russia which has yet to fully settle the amount of $500,000 owed since October 1995. Several rich contributors like Germany and Japan pay their dues many months late, thus aggravating the problem.

It would be a shame if the UN had to continue to operate on a shoestring budget when so many pressing needs are brought to its doorstep. A key area that would suffer from the lack of funding is peacekeeping. Though UN peacekeeping efforts have not been spectacular, largely because of superpower and big-power politics, they have contributed in a small way towards stabilizing volatile situations.

The UN has also been deeply involved in various projects in different parts of the world connected with promoting health care, immunizing children, empowering women, eradicating illiteracy and improving methods of food production and distribution. The work of UN agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food & Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) have made a significant impact upon the lives of ordinary men, women and children across the globe.

It is of course true that the UN System has grown into a huge, unwieldy bureaucracy and is in dire need of reform. It is also true that the UN Security Council, in its present form, is a totally undemocratic structure and does not represent the aspirations of the vast majority of humankind. Nor can anyone deny that the General Assembly has very little political clout and is in no position to determine the direction of global politics.

Though the UN system as a whole has many glaring deficiencies, the fact still remains that it is the only truly global forum for humankind today. At a time when globalization driven by multinational corporations and communication technology is moulding an international system in which the powerful will perpetuate their dominance over the powerless with even greater impunity, it is imperative that the UN continues to exist. For, at the very least, it provides a channel of sorts for the powerless to express their concerns in the presence of the powerful.

This is why the citizens of the world should ensure that the UN does not collapse at this juncture under the weight of its colossal debts. Citizens groups should pressure the large debtor-states to pay up. The U.S. in particular should be persuaded to fulfil its financial obligations to the UN.

Let the citizens of the world make this their collective commitment on this auspicious day -- October 24 -- which is the UN Day!

(Courtesy Just World Trust)

Hong Kong Forces 105 Vietnamese Boat People Home

HONG KONG — Hong Kong forced home a group of 105 Vietnamese boat people Friday in its campaign to clear all detention centers before the handover of the territory to China next year.

The group, comprising of 35 men, 25 women and 45 children, left for Hanoi on a chartered flight, a government spokesman said.

Most of them were from southern and central Vietnam and had been in Hong Kong since 1991.

Hong Kong has stepped up forced repatriation in recent months in a bid to close down all Vietnamese detention centres by mid-1996, a month before Hong Kong reverts to Chinese sovereignty. China wants all Vietnamese asylum seekers be cleared out by then.

As a result of the declining population of Vietnamese boat people, which now stands at less than 10,000, the authorities have decided to consolidate the remaining asylum seekers in the High Island Detention Center, while the main camp, the Whitehead Detention Center, will be closed on January 3.

The Whitehead camp was opened in January 1989 when the number of Vietnamese asylum seekers stood at about 11,000.

When the population reached its height of over 60,000 in October 1991, the center provided accommodation for about 25,000.

The Whitehead Detention Center has been the scene of protests and riotings in past years over the forced repatriation by the government.

Most of the Vietnamese who arrived in Hong Kong are screened-out as economic migrants rather than political refugees, and therefore not eligible for resettlement in a third country.

(AFP)



BUKAVU, Zaire (November 25): A sick Rwandan Hutu refugee lays under a tent set up by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) near the eastern Zairean border town of Bukavu, where much needed relief aid is still awaited. The UNHCR said November 25 that around 100 Rwandans are returning every day from Bukavu. (AFP PHOTO)

President Bill Clinton Emphasizes UN's Importance

WASHINGTON — President Bill Clinton emphasized the importance of the United Nation's role in the world and the need for the United States to fully participate in it.

Clinton made the remarks after announcing Madeleine Albright, U.S. ambassador to the UN, is his choice for secretary of state.

The United Nations "is important, and it's going to get more important. And the United States had better be there, playing its part, if we expect it to do what we think should be done in the world," Clinton said in response to a reporter's question.

The president also was questioned about Albright's chances of winning Senate confirmation in the face of Republican hostility to the UN.

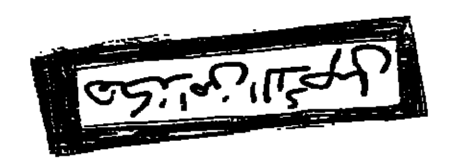
People in Congress "know that I believe the United Nations is an important organization," Clinton said. (AFP)

Social Challenge

Facing Poverty

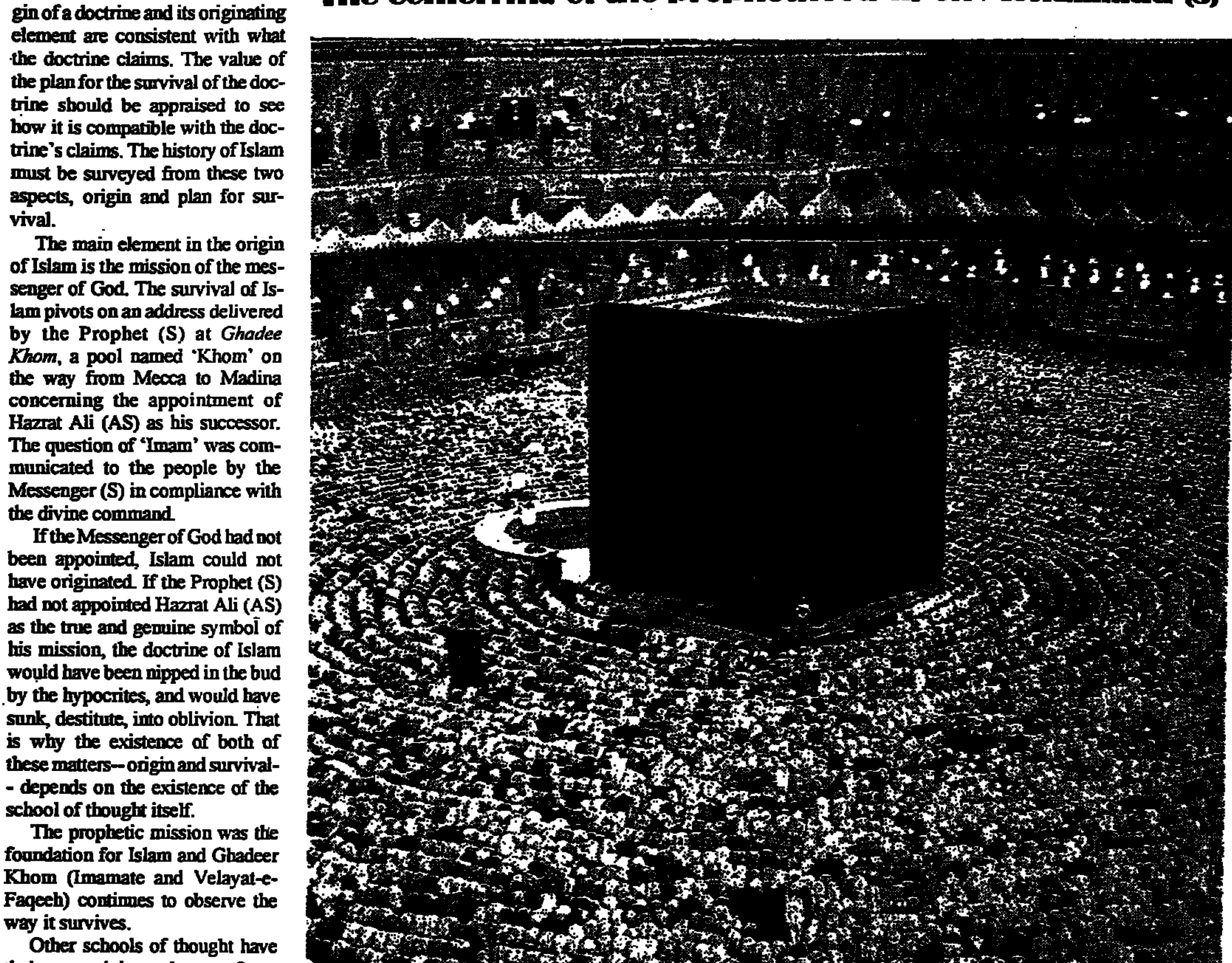
- *I have a suggestion. Environmental impact reports are required internationally for projects at all levels. Why not make it compulsory to prepare reports on impacts to correct inequalities?*
  Maria Teresa Augusti, Brazil
  Latin-America Public Hearing
- *I am a parent in a very poor family of seven children in Ormoc City, Leyte. My husband's low wage as a sugar-plantation worker is not enough to feed us, so that two of our children go to elementary school while the five eldest work to help support everyone. Our eldest son left home in 1988 and has worked ever since as a clandestine employee in a piggery at Bulacan.*
  Enrica Albes, Philippines
  South-East Asia Public Hearing
- *Our children leave school because it is expensive, fathers cannot find work, prices keep rising. There is nothing to collect from the forest to help our unemployed husbands. While the land we till becomes smaller—reduced grazing lands have made our animals disappear—our families become larger. What will happen to our children, and what can we do for them?*
  Sibonelelo Group, Zimbabwe
  Southern Africa Public Hearing

(Courtesy Caring for the Future)



Mab'as

The conferring of the prophethood upon Mohammad (S)



In the name of God, the Compassionate the Merciful

All schools of thought claiming to guide mankind must be looked at from two points of view: the factors involved in appearance of the school, and the maneuvers performed to survive. It must be ascertained whether or not the origin of a doctrine and its originating element are consistent with what the doctrine claims. The value of the plan for the survival of the doctrine should be appraised to see how it is compatible with the doctrine's claims. The history of Islam must be surveyed from these two aspects, origin and plan for survival.

The main element in the origin of Islam is the mission of the messenger of God. The survival of Islam pivots on an address delivered by the Prophet (S) at *Ghadee Khom*, a pool named 'Khom' on the way from Mecca to Madina concerning the appointment of Hazrat Ali (AS) as his successor. The question of 'Imam' was communicated to the people by the Messenger (S) in compliance with the divine command.

If the Messenger of God had not been appointed, Islam could not have originated. If the Prophet (S) had not appointed Hazrat Ali (AS) as the true and genuine symbol of his mission, the doctrine of Islam would have been nipped in the bud by the hypocrites, and would have sunk, destitute, into oblivion. That is why the existence of both of these matters-- origin and survival-- depends on the existence of the school of thought itself.

The prophetic mission was the foundation for Islam and Ghadeer Khom (Imamate and Velayat-e-Faqeeh) continues to observe the way it survives.

Other schools of thought have their own origins and ways of survival. Now, we want to look and see how far the main element, origin, and methods of survival of a doctrine accord with what that doctrine claims. What is the prerequisites necessary? These are inter-related. If the main elements claim something contradictory or an inconsistency appears among survival methods, claims, or origin then these take place only under special circumstances prevalent in society. These will all disclose any deceit lying behind the existence of that school of thought.

Lets's look past the centuries; let us overlook history to reach the time when Mohammad (S) and Hara Mountain loudly declare their appearance. Hara is a mountain north of Mecca with rocky, tortuous paths to the top. On the north side of the mountain there is a cave, not of easy access. One must bear great difficulties to get there over the rocky paths of the craggy mountain. The rays of the sun only touch the entrance and the cave itself is engulfed in darkness.

Mohammad (S), an agitated soul, in quest of the truth of faith and light of monotheism through the mist of falsehood, blasphemy and polytheism sought peace of mind in the calm of the mountain side. He prayed to his Lord and thought of human ignorance and fallibilities. He wondered how man falls to the nadir of vice when he has the ability to ascend to the zenith of virtue. He doesn't know why man, who can reach as high as the sublimity of the Divine Being, is satisfied to live in the obscurity of ignorance and abjectness. The state which Hazrat Ali (AS) the honest and loyal companion of the Prophet (S) who perpetuated the main path of his mission — describes is as follows:

God appointed Mohammad (S) the honorable Prophet of Islam when there had been no messenger sent for a long time. The people of the world were in lethargy. Affairs were cut short. Wars were blazing everywhere. The world was engulfed in the darkness of ignorance and impiety. Fraud prevailed. The leaves for the tree of humanity had faded; its freshness had turned yellow, rendered fruitless. Life revealed its ugly face. Such a fiasco bore nothing but disturbance and chaos.

Hazrat Ali (AS) continues God sent Mohammad (S) on his mission to caution the people about the way they lived. He entrusted his divine command to him. You Arabs had then put your faith in the worst religion and lived the worst life. You slept on rugged land, infested with biting snakes. You were undernourished and drank contaminated water. You sought pleasure in bloodshed. You broke the ties of kinship and struggled with your kinsfolk. You worshipped idols and you were slaves to your sins ... At the age of forty Mohammad's (S) ability to receive the Mission bore fruit. If he had been destitute of such a capacity, he could not have been the source of any good deeds.

It's still, starry night on Hara; the silence heavily blankets the area. Mohammad (S) is worshipping his God, deep in mediation. Spending a few hours on Hara, he decides to go to the cave. Suddenly he sees a dazzling light blazing in the sky. A red light stemming from the depth of the starry sky, is moving towards him. Mohammad (S) anxious at this sight freezes in his place. A voice approaches him thorough the light, calling him by name:

Mohammad
Who is that calling me?
Gabriel! (Angel)
Who are you?
Recit!

Confused as he was, Mohammad (S) runs out, but sees no one. All is silence, sky and mountain. Again the light appears and the voice says:

Recite, Mohammad!

In an indescribable anxiety, he shouts:

I can not recite; I have studied no where and have had no one to teach me.
Recite, recite, Mohammad!

The celestial light fills him with the hope of being able to do what he is ordered to do. He seeks the enormous effort in himself to read, and asks:

What should I recite?
Recite: In the Name of the Lord who created, Created Man from a clot. Recite and it is your Lord the most Honorable, who teaches by the pen. Teaches man that which he knew not.

(Holy Qoran the Colt: 1-5)

Now Mohammad (S), overwhelmed by the revelation, hastens home anxiously to see his wife Khadija (SA), while Gabriel calls out again:

Oh Mohammad, you are God's messenger...

Oh Mohammad from now on you are God's messenger...

The desert resound with Gabriel's voice, and Mohammad (S) runs toward Khadija's house...

This is the inception of Islam, the appearance of a school of thought and a Prophet who is to inspire men and guide them, as he himself inspired and guided.

One who wishes to be promoted to the position of offering blessings himself should first be elevated from the state of imperfection to perfection by the Divine mission.

The prophetic mission means the elevation of those with the capacity of being elevated, the acquisition of this capability, the transition from lack of a quality yet potential to gain it -- to owner and master of the quality.

Britain's Conservatives in Open Conflict Over Europe

LONDON — Britain's ruling Conservatives were drawn into a public and highly-damaging conflict over Europe on Friday after a former minister demanded that Prime Minister John Major ditch his "wait-and-see" approach to the European single currency.

Edward Leigh, an ex-Home Office minister, accused Major of defying the "Democratic will" of the party by sticking to his policy of keeping the options open over European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU).

He insisted that the majority of Conservative deputies and ministers wanted the cabinet, before the next general election due by next spring, to rule out joining EMU during the following five-year Parliament.

This would prevent Britain from adopting the single currency until 2002, ruling out taking part in the first wave of countries to sign up to the Euro, which is scheduled to be launched on January 1, 1999.

"I believe that the Democratic will of the party is now quite clear to rule out a single currency," Leigh said in a BBC radio interview.

"We are trying to persuade the prime minister to win the general election, to go with the mood of public opinion," he added.

Leigh's attack on the prime minister reflects intense anger among the Tories' increasingly powerful Euro-Sceptic wing.

The Euro-Skeptics believe that on Tuesday, Major was pressured into ruling out a policy change by pro-Europeans Chancellor Kenneth Clarke, and Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine.

Clarke on Thursday issued an unprecedented denial that he had threatened this week to resign if his wishes were ignored.

At a turbulent meeting Thursday night of a key grouping of right-wing Conservative deputies, the Tory Backbench 1922 Committee, Leigh warned that the present policy on a single currency was "unsustainable".

The conservative Euro-Skeptics, who are against Britain taking part in any further European integration, fear that the party will definitely lose the next election unless major switches position.

These concerns were heightened by a gallup poll published on Friday which showed the Labour opposition extending its lead over the Tories to 37 points, a 10-point increase over last month.

This latest conflict over the question of Britain's participation in the Euro, which is a key issue dividing the Tory party's anti- and pro-European wings, has been simmering all week.

The right-wing *Daily Telegraph* newspaper set the ball rolling at the start of the week with speculation that Major was on the verge of abandoning his "wait-and-see" attitude towards the single currency.

A leading Euro-Skeptic Conservative member of Parliament, Tony Marlow, called on Thursday night on the prime minister to "purge" his chancellor, who is seen by right-wingers as the principal obstacle to reversing the policy on EMU.

The *Financial Times* on Friday pointed to a breakdown in relations between Clarke and Major, and cited senior government sources who said that the chancellor might have to go.

But Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind rejected Leigh's claims that most Conservatives wanted a change in the policy, which was agreed at the Tories' last annual conference, in October.

"That's rubbish, because as we saw at the party conference the overwhelming view of the party conference, all the party activists - several thousands of them there - was to endorse the prime minister's and the cabinet's position," he said on BBC radio.

(AFP)

Babrak Karmal, the Puppet the Soviets Decided They Did Not Need



KABUL — Despite spending seven years as the Soviet Union's puppet, Babrak Karmal was a scion of the Afghan bourgeoisie who could never have led his country but for the 1979 Red Army invasion.

Karmal, who died last Sunday in Moscow, was born roughly 67 years ago in Bagrami, a village some 20 kilometers (12 miles) southeast of Kabul, the son of a general of King Zaher Shah.

It was officially in response to an appeal from Karmal, then leader of a pro-Soviet government-in-exile, that Soviet troops invaded Afghanistan in December 1979.

The longtime communist was brought back from exile by the Red Army, just a few days after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, earning the condemnation of the world and igniting a relentless civil war.

But his Soviet masters had already abandoned Karmal, who left Afghanistan for Moscow in 1986, shortly after the coming to power of Mikhail Gorbachev.

Karmal, a short man, was just one of many scions of the Kabul bourgeoisie whose greed for power allowed the Soviet Union to get involved in a feudal state.

He attended a German-run secondary school in Kabul, after which he studied law and political science. It is at this stage that his political career began.

Although briefly imprisoned in the early 1950s for agitating against royal authority, he quickly gained a reputation as a rousing speaker. But Afghans saw him as an atheist and communist whose dream was to overturn an unjust but multifaith order.

Twice in the 1960s, during the monarchy of Zaher Shah, Karmal was elected to Parliament to represent a seat in the capital.

Karmal had hopes of power after a coup by Mohammed Daud, the so-called 'Prince-President', but the king's cousin never called Karmal to office, although for a time he protected the communist.

Around this time Karmal founded a small newspaper called *'Parcham'* — which means 'the flag'. Although it only lasted for a few issues, it became the focus of a communist faction of the same name, rival to the 'Khalq' — or 'the people' — faction led by Noor Mohammed Taraki and Hafizullah Amin.

The two groups joined forces in 1977 and in April 1978 overthrew Daud. But once in power, they soon fell out.

Karmal served as vice-president of the revolutionary council and vice-prime minister, but was pushed out after two months and named ambassador to Prague.

The move to Czechoslovakia almost certainly saved his life. In August 1978 he and his party were accused of treason.

Amin also eliminated his erstwhile ally Taraki, only to be eliminated himself by the Red Army, which brought Karmal back to Afghanistan in its trucks. He was soon decried as "a puppet, a traitor, an usurper" by Mujehedeen.

By May 1986, Karmal was totally discredited and lost even Moscow's support. He left for the Soviet Union, officially for medical treatment, and was replaced by Najibullah.

(AFP)

